Burleigh James.

CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE.

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CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE.

BY

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CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE.

JOCULAR PREACHERS.

These preachers, whose works are excessively rare, form a race unknown to the general reader. I shall sketch the characters of these pious buffoons, before I introduce them to his acquaintance. They, as it has been said of Sterne, seemed to have wished, every now and then, to have thrown their wigs into the faces of their auditors.

These preachers flourished in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries; we are therefore to ascribe their extravagant mixture of grave admonition with facetious illustration, comic tales which have been occasionally adopted by the most licentious writers, and minute and lively descriptions, to the great simplicity of the times, when the grossest indecency was never concealed under a gentle periphrasis, but every thing was called by its name. All this was enforced by the most daring personalities, and seasoned by those temporary

allusions which neither spared, nor feared even the throne. These ancient sermons therefore are singularly precious, to those whose inquisitive pleasures are gratified by tracing the *manners* of former ages. When Henry Stephens, in his apology for Herodotus, describes the irregularities of the age, and the minutiæ of national manners, he effects this chiefly by extracts from these sermons. Their wit is not always the brightest, nor their satire the most poignant; but there is always that prevailing *naïveté* of the age running through their rude eloquence, which interests the reflecting mind. In a word, these sermons were addressed to the multitude; and therefore they show good sense and absurdity; fancy and puerility; satire and insipidity; extravagance and truth.

Oliver Maillard, a famous cordelier, died in 1502. This preacher having pointed some keen traits in his sermons at Louis XI., the irritated monarch had our cordelier informed that he would throw him into the river. He replied undaunted, and not forgetting his satire: "The king may do as he chooses; but tell him that I shall sooner get to paradise by water, than he will arrive by all his post horses." He alluded to travelling by post, which this monarch had lately introduced into France. This bold answer, it is said, intimidated Louis; it is certain that Maillard continued as courageous and satirical as ever in his pulpit.

The following extracts are descriptive of the manners of the times.

In attacking rapine and robbery, under the first head

he describes a kind of usury, which was practised in the days of Ben Jonson, and I am told in the present, as well as in the times of Maillard. "This," says he, "is called a palliated usury. It is thus. When a person is in want of money, he goes to a treasurer (a kind of banker or merchant), on whom he has an order for 1000 crowns; the treasurer tells him that he will pay him in a fortnight's time, when he is to receive the money. The poor man cannot wait. Our good treasurer tells him, I will give you half in money and half in goods. So he passes his goods that are worth 100 crowns for 200." He then touches on the bribes which these treasurers and clerks in office took, excusing themselves by alleging the little pay they otherwise received. "All these practices be sent to the devils!" cries Maillard, in thus addressing himself to the *ladies:* "it is for *you* all this damnation ensues. Yes! yes! you must have rich satins, and girdles of gold out of this accursed money. When any one has any thing to receive from the husband, he must first make a present to the wife of some fine gown, or girdle, or ring. If you ladies and gentlemen who are battening on your pleasures, and wear scarlet clothes, I believe if you were closely put in a good press, we should see the blood of the poor gush out, with which your scarlet is dyed."

Maillard notices the following curious particulars of the mode of *cheating in trade* in his times.

He is violent against the apothecaries for their cheats. They mix ginger with cinnamon, which they sell for real spices: they put their bags of ginger, pepper, saf-

fron, cinnamon, and other drugs in damp cellars, that they may weigh heavier; they mix oil with saffron, to give it a colour, and to make it weightier. He does not forget those tradesmen who put water in their wool, and moisten their cloth that it may stretch; tavern-keepers, who sophisticate and mingle wines; the butchers who blow up their meat, and who mix hog's lard with the fat of their meat. He terribly declaims against those who buy with a great allowance of measure and weight, and then sell with a small measure and weight; and curses those who, when they weigh, press the scales down with their finger. But it is time to conclude with Master Oliver! His catalogue is, however, by no means exhausted; and it may not be amiss to observe, that the present age has retained every one of the sins.

The following extracts are from Menot's sermons, which are written, like Maillard's, in a barbarous Latin mixed with old French.

Michael Menot died in 1518. I think he has more wit than Maillard, and occasionally displays a brilliant imagination; with the same singular mixture of grave declamation and farcical absurdities. He is called in the title-page the *golden-tongued*. It runs thus, *Predicatoris qui lingua aurea, sua tempestate nuncupatus est, Sermones quadragesimales, ab ipso olim Turonis declamati. Paris*, 1525, 8vo.

When he compares the church with a vine, he says, "There were once some Britons and Englishmen who would have carried away all France into their country, because they found our wine better than their beer; but

as they well knew that they could not always remain in France, nor carry away France into their country, they would at least carry with them several stocks of vines; they planted some in England; but these stocks soon degenerated, because the soil was not adapted to them." Notwithstanding what Menot said in 1500, and that we have tried so often, we have often flattered ourselves that if we plant vineyards we may have English wine.

The following beautiful figure describes those who live neglectful of their aged parents, who had cherished them into prosperity. "See the trees flourish and recover their leaves; it is their root that has produced all; but when the branches are loaded with flowers and with fruits, they yield nothing to the root. This is an image of those children who prefer their own amusements, and to game away their fortunes, than to give to their old parents the cares which they want."

He acquaints us with the following circumstances of the immorality of that age: "Who has not got a mistress besides his wife? The poor wife eats the fruits of bitterness, and even makes the bed for the mistress." Oaths were not unfashionable in his day. "Since the world has been world, this crime was never greater. There were once pillories for these swearers; but now this crime is so common, that the child of five years can swear; and even the old dotard of eighty, who has only two teeth remaining, can fling out an oath!"

On the power of the fair sex of his day, he observes, "A father says, my son studies; he must have a bishoprick, or an abbey of 500 livres. Then he will have

dogs, horses, and mistresses, like others. Another says, I will have my son placed at court, and have many honourable dignities. To succeed well, both employ the mediation of women; unhappily the church and the law are entirely at their disposal. We have artful Dalilahs who shear us close. For twelve crowns and an ell of velvet given to a woman, you gain the worst lawsuit, and the best living."

In his last sermon, Menot recapitulates the various topics he had touched on during Lent. This extract presents a curious picture, and a just notion of the versatile talents of these preachers.

"I have told *ecclesiastics* how they should conduct themselves; not that they are ignorant of their duties; but I must ever repeat to girls, not to suffer themselves to be duped by them. I have told these ecclesiastics that they should imitate the lark; if she has a grain she does not remain idle, but feels her pleasure in singing, and in singing always is ascending towards heaven. So they should not amass; but elevate the hearts of all to God; and not do as the frogs who are crying out day and night, and think they have a fine throat, but always remain fixed in the mud.

"I have told the *men of the law* that they should have the qualities of the eagle. The first is, that this bird when it flies fixes its eye on the sun; so all judges, counsellors, and attorneys, in judging, writing, and signing, should always have God before their eyes. And secondly, this bird is never greedy; it willingly shares its prey with others; so all lawyers, who are

rich in crowns after having had their bills paid, should distribute some to the poor, particularly when they are conscious that their money arises from their prey.

" I have spoken of the *marriage state*, but all that I have said has been disregarded. See those wretches who break the hymeneal chains, and abandon their wives! they pass their holidays out of their parishes, because if they remained at home they must have joined their wives at church ; they like their prostitutes better ; and it will be so every day in the year! I would as well dine with a Jew or a heretic, as with them. What an infected place is this! Mistress Lubricity has taken possession of the whole city ; look in every corner, and you'll be convinced.

" For you *married women!* If you have heard the nightingale's song, you must know that she sings during three months, and that she is silent when she has young ones. So there is a time in which you may sing and take your pleasures in the marriage state, and another to watch your children. Don't damn yourselves for them ; and remember it would be better to see them drowned than damned.

" As to *widows*, I observe, that the turtle withdraws and sighs in the woods, whenever she has lost her companion ; so must they retire into the wood of the cross, and having lost their temporal husband, take no other but Jesus Christ.

" And, to close all, I have told *girls* that they must fly from the company of men, and not permit them to embrace, nor even touch them. Look on the rose ; it

has a delightful odour; it embalms the place in which it is placed; but if you grasp it underneath, it will prick you till the blood issues. The beauty of the rose is the beauty of the girl. The beauty and perfume of the first invite to smell and to handle it, but when it is touched underneath it pricks sharply; the beauty of a girl likewise invites the hand; but you, my young ladies, you must never suffer this, for I tell you that every man who does this designs to make you harlots."

These ample extracts may convey the same pleasure to the reader which I have received by collecting them from their scarce originals, little known even to the curious. Menot, it cannot be denied, displays a poetic imagination, and a fertility of conception which distinguishes him among his rivals. The same taste and popular manner came into our country, and were suited to the simplicity of the age. In 1527, our Bishop Latimer preached a sermon, in which he expresses himself thus:—"Now, ye have heard what is meant by this *first card*, and how ye ought to *play*. I purpose again to *deal* unto you another *card of the same suit;* for they be so nigh affinity, that one cannot be *well played* without the other." It is curious to observe about a century afterwards, as Fuller informs us, that when a country clergyman imitated these familiar allusions, the taste of the congregation had so changed that he was interrupted by peals of laughter!

Even in more modern times have Menot and Maillard found an imitator in little Father André, as well as others. His character has been variously drawn. He is by some

represented as a kind of buffoon in the pulpit; but others more judiciously observe, that he only indulged his natural genius, and uttered humorous and lively things, as the good father observes himself, to keep the attention of his audience awake. He was not always laughing. "He told many a bold truth," says the author of *Guerre des Auteurs anciens et modernes*, "that sent bishops to their dioceses, and made many a coquette blush. He possessed the art of biting when he smiled; and more ably combated vice by his ingenious satire than by those vague apostrophes which no one takes to himself. While others were straining their minds to catch at sublime thoughts which no one understood, he lowered his talents to the most humble situations, and to the minutest things. From them he drew his examples and his comparisons; and the one and the other never failed of success." Marville says, that "His expressions were full of shrewd simplicity. He made very free use of the most popular proverbs. His comparisons and figures were always borrowed from the most familiar and lowest things." To ridicule effectually the reigning vices, he would prefer quirks or puns to sublime thoughts; and he was little solicitous of his choice of expression, so the things came home. Gozzi, in Italy, had the same power in drawing unexpected inferences from vulgar and familiar occurrences. It was by this art Whitfield obtained so many followers. In Piozzi's British Synonymes, vol. ii. p. 205, we have an instance of Gozzi's manner. In the time of Charles II. it became fashionable to introduce humour into sermons. Sterne seems to have revived it in his; South's sparkle perpetually with wit and pun.

Far different, however, are the characters of the sublime preachers, of whom the French have preserved the following descriptions.

We have not any more Bourdaloue, La Rue, and Massillon; but the idea which still exists of their manner of addressing their auditors may serve instead of lessons. Each had his own peculiar mode, always adapted to place, time, circumstance; to their auditors, their style, and their subject.

Bourdaloue, with a collected air, had little action; with eyes generally half closed, he penetrated the hearts of the people by the sound of a voice uniform and solemn. The tone with which a sacred orator pronounced the words, *Tu es ille vir!* "Thou art the man!" in suddenly addressing them to one of the kings of France, struck more forcibly than their application. Madame de Sevigné describes our preacher, by saying, "Father Bourdaloue thunders at Notre Dame."

Le Rue appeared with the air of a prophet. His manner was irresistible, full of fire, intelligence, and force. He had strokes perfectly original. Several old men, his contemporaries, still shuddered at the recollection of the expression which he employed in an apostrophe to the God of vengeance, *Evaginare gladium tuum!*

The person of Massillon affected his admirers. He was seen in the pulpit with that air of simplicity, that modest demeanour, those eyes humbly declining, those unstudied gestures, that passionate tone, that mild countenance of a man penetrated with his subject, conveying to the mind the most luminous ideas, and to the heart

the most tender emotions. Baron, the tragedian, coming out from one of his sermons, truth forced from his lips a confession humiliating to his profession: "My friend," said he to one of his companions, "this is an *orator!* and we are *only actors.*"

MASTERLY IMITATORS.

THERE have been found occasionally some artists who could so perfectly imitate the spirit, the taste, the character, and the peculiarities of great masters, that they have not unfrequently deceived the most skilful connoisseurs. Michael Angelo sculptured a sleeping Cupid, of which having broken off an arm, he buried the statue in a place where he knew it would soon be found. The critics were never tired of admiring it, as one of the most precious relics of antiquity. It was sold to the Cardinal of St. George, to whom Michael Angelo discovered the whole mystery, by joining to the Cupid the arm which he had reserved.

An anecdote of Peter Mignard is more singular. This great artist painted a Magdalen on a canvass fabricated at Rome. A broker, in concert with Mignard, went to the Chevalier de Clairville, and told him as a secret that he was to receive from Italy a Magdalen of Guido, and his masterpiece. The chevalier caught the bait, begged the preference, and purchased the picture at a very high price.

He was informed that he had been imposed upon, and that the Magdalen was painted by Mignard. Mig-

nard himself caused the alarm to be given, but the amateur would not believe it; all the connoisseurs agreed it was a Guido, and the famous Le Brun corroborated this opinion.

The chevalier came to Mignard:—"Some persons assure me that my Magdalen is your work!"—"Mine! they do me great honour. I am sure that Le Brun is not of this opinion."—"Le Brun swears it can be no other than a Guido. You shall dine with me, and meet several of the first connoisseurs."

On the day of meeting, the picture was again more closely inspected. Mignard hinted his doubts whether the piece was the work of that great master; he insinuated that it was possible to be deceived; and added, that if it was Guido's, he did not think it in his best manner. "It is a Guido, sir, and in his very best manner," replied Le Brun, with warmth; and all the critics were unanimous. Mignard then spoke in a firm tone of voice: "And I, gentlemen, will wager three hundred louis that it is not a Guido." The dispute now became violent: Le Brun was desirous of accepting the wager. In a word, the affair became such that it could add nothing more to the glory of Mignard. "No, sir," replied the latter, "I am too honest to bet when I am certain to win. Monsieur le Chevalier, this piece cost you 2000 crowns: the money must be returned,—the painting is *mine*." Le Brun would not believe it. "The proof," Mignard continued, "is easy. On this canvass, which is a Roman one, was the portrait of a cardinal; I will show you his cap."—The chevalier did not know which

of the rival artists to credit. The proposition alarmed him. "He who painted the picture shall repair it," said Mignard. He took a pencil dipped in oil, and rubbing the hair of the Magdalen, discovered the cap of the cardinal. The honour of the ingenious painter could no longer be disputed; Le Brun, vexed, sarcastically exclaimed, "Always paint Guido, but never Mignard."

There is a collection of engravings by that ingenious artist Bernard Picart, which has been published under the title of *The Innocent Impostors.* Picart had long been vexed at the taste of his day, which ran wholly in favour of antiquity, and no one would look at, much less admire, a modern master. He published a pretended collection, or a set of prints, from the designs of the great painters; in which he imitated the etchings and engravings of the various masters, and much were these prints admired as the works of Guido, Rembrandt, and others. Having had his joke, they were published under the title of *Imposteurs Innocens.* The connoisseurs, however, are strangely divided in their opinion of the merit of this collection. Gilpin classes these "Innocent Impostors" among the most entertaining of his works, and is delighted by the happiness with which he has outdone in their own excellences the artists whom he copied; but Strutt, too grave to admit of jokes that twitch the connoisseurs, declares that they could never have deceived an experienced judge, and reprobates such kinds of ingenuity, played off at the cost of the venerable brotherhood of the cognoscenti!

The same thing was, however, done by Goltzius, who being disgusted at the preference given to the works of

Albert Durer, Lucas of Leyden, and others of that school, and having attempted to introduce a better taste, which was not immediately relished, he published what were afterwards called his *master-pieces*. These are six prints in the style of these masters, merely to prove that Goltzius could imitate their works, if he thought proper. One of these, the Circumcision, he had printed on soiled paper; and to give it the brown tint of antiquity had carefully smoked it, by which means it was sold as a curious performance, and deceived some of the most capital connoisseurs of the day, one of whom bought it as one of the finest engravings of Albert Durer: even Strutt acknowledges the merit of Goltzius's *master-pieces!*

To these instances of artists I will add others of celebrated authors. Muretus rendered Joseph Scaliger, a great stickler for the ancients, highly ridiculous by an artifice which he practised. He sent some verses which he pretended were copied from an old manuscript. The verses were excellent, and Scaliger was credulous. After having read them, he exclaimed they were admirable, and affirmed that they were written by an old comic poet, Trabeus. He quoted them, in his commentary on Varro *De Re Rustica*, as one of the most precious fragments of antiquity. It was then, when he had fixed his foot firmly in the trap, that Muretus informed the world of the little dependence to be placed on the critical sagacity of one so prejudiced in favour of the ancients, and who considered his judgment as infallible.

The Abbé Regnier Desmarais, having written an ode

or, as the Italians call it, canzone, sent it to the Abbé Strozzi at Florence, who used it to impose on three or four academicians of Della Crusca. He gave out that Leo Allatius, librarian of the Vatican, in examining carefully the MSS. of Petrarch preserved there, had found two pages slightly glued, which having separated, he had discovered this ode. The fact was not at first easily credited; but afterwards the similarity of style and manner rendered it highly probable. When Strozzi undeceived the public, it procured the Abbé Regnier a place in the academy, as an honourable testimony of his ingenuity.

Pere Commire, when Louis XIV. resolved on the conquest of Holland, composed a Latin fable, entitled "The Sun and the Frogs," in which he assumed with such felicity the style and character of Phædrus, that the learned Wolfius was deceived, and innocently inserted it in his edition of that fabulist.

Faminius Strada would have deceived most of the critics of his age, if he had given as the remains of antiquity the different pieces of history and poetry which he composed on the model of the ancients, in his *Prolusiones Academicæ*. To preserve probability he might have given out that he had drawn them from some old and neglected library; he had then only to have added a good commentary, tending to display the conformity of the style and manner of these fragments with the works of those authors to whom he ascribed them.

Sigonius was a great master of the style of Cicero, and ventured to publish a treatise *De Consolatione*,

as a composition of Cicero recently discovered: many were deceived by the counterfeit, which was performed with great dexterity, and was long received as genuine: but he could not deceive Lipsius, who, after reading only ten lines, threw it away, exclaiming, "*Vah! non est Ciceronis.*" The late Mr. Burke succeeded more skilfully in his "Vindication of Natural Society," which for a long time passed as the composition of Lord Bolingbroke; so perfect is this ingenious imposture of the spirit, manner, and course of thinking of the noble author. I believe it was written for a wager, and fairly won.

EDWARD THE FOURTH.

Our Edward the Fourth was a gay and voluptuous prince; and probably owed his crown to his handsomeness, his enormous debts, and passion for the fair sex. He had many Jane Shores. Honest Philip de Comines, his contemporary, says, "That what greatly contributed to his entering London as soon as he appeared at its gates was the great debts this prince had contracted, which made his creditors gladly assist him; and the high favour in which he was held by the *bourgeoises*, into whose good graces he had frequently glided, and who gained over to him their husbands, who, I suppose, for the tranquillity of their lives, were glad to depose or to raise monarchs. Many ladies and rich citizens' wives, of whom formerly he had great privacies and familiar acquaintance, gained over to him their husbands and relations."

This is the description of his voluptuous life; we must

recollect that the writer had been an eye-witness, and was an honest man.

"He had been during the last twelve years more accustomed to his ease and pleasure than any other prince who lived in his time. He had nothing in his thoughts but *les dames*, and of them more than was *reasonable;* and hunting-matches, good eating, and great care of his person. When he went in their seasons to these hunting-matches, he always had carried with him great pavilions for *les dames*, and at the same time gave splendid entertainments; so that it is not surprising that his person was as jolly as any one I ever saw. He was then young, and as handsome as any man of his age; but he has since become enormously fat."

Since I have got old Philip in my hand, the reader will not, perhaps, be displeased, if he attends to a little more of his *naïveté*, which will appear in the form of a *conversazione* of the times. He relates what passed between Edward and the king of France.

"When the ceremony of the oath was concluded, our king, who was desirous of being friendly, began to say to the king of England, in a laughing way, that he must come to Paris, and be jovial amongst our ladies; and that he would give him the Cardinal de Bourbon for his confessor, who would very willingly absolve him of any *sin* which perchance he might commit. The king of England seemed well pleased at the invitation, and laughed heartily; for he knew that the said cardinal was *un fort bon compagnon*. When the king was returning, he spoke on the road to me; and said that he did not

like to find the king of England so much inclined to come to Paris. 'He is,' said he, 'a very *handsome* king; he likes the women too much. He may probably find one at Paris that may make him like to come too often, or stay too long. His predecessors have already been too much at Paris and in Normandy;' and that 'his company was not agreeable *this side of the sea;* but that, beyond the sea, he wished to be *bon frère et amy.*'"

I have called Philip de Comines *honest.* The old writers, from the simplicity of their style, usually receive this honourable epithet; but sometimes they deserve it as little as most modern memoir-writers. No enemy is indeed so terrible as a man of genius. Comines's violent enmity to the Duke of Burgundy, which appears in these memoirs, has been traced by the minute researchers of anecdotes; and the cause is not honourable to the memoir-writer, whose resentment was implacable. De Comines was born a subject of the Duke of Burgundy, and for seven years had been a favourite; but one day returning from hunting with the Duke, then Count de Charolois, in familiar jocularity he sat himself down before the prince, ordering the prince to pull off his boots. The count laughed, and did this; but in return for Comines's princely amusement, dashed the boot in his face, and gave Comines a bloody nose. From that time he was mortified in the court of Burgundy by the nickname of the *booted head.* Comines long felt a rankling wound in his mind; and after this domestic quarrel, for it was nothing more, he went over to the king of France, and

wrote off his bile against the Duke of Burgundy in these "Memoirs," which give posterity a caricature likeness of that prince, whom he is ever censuring for presumption, obstinacy, pride, and cruelty. This Duke of Burgundy, however, it is said, with many virtues, had but one great vice, the vice of sovereigns, that of ambition!

The impertinence of Comines had not been chastised with great severity; but the nickname was never forgiven: unfortunately for the duke, Comines was a man of genius. When we are versed in the history of the times, we often discover that memoir-writers have some secret poison in their hearts. Many, like Comines, have had the boot dashed on their nose. Personal rancour wonderfully enlivens the style of Lord Orford and Cardinal de Retz. Memoirs are often dictated by its fiercest spirit; and then histories are composed from memoirs. Where is TRUTH? Not always in histories and memoirs!

ELIZABETH.

THIS great queen passionately admired handsome persons, and he was already far advanced in her favour who approached her with beauty and grace. She had so unconquerable an aversion for men who had been treated unfortunately by nature, that she could not endure their presence.

When she issued from her palace, her guards were careful to disperse from before her eyes hideous and deformed people, the lame, the hunchbacked, &c.; in a

word, all those whose appearance might shock her fastidious sensations.

"There is this singular and admirable in the conduct of Elizabeth that she made her pleasures subservient to her policy, and she maintained her affairs by what in general occasions the ruin of princes. So secret were her amours, that even to the present day their mysteries cannot be penetrated; but the utility she drew from them is public, and always operated for the good of her people. Her lovers were her ministers, and her ministers were her lovers. Love commanded, love was obeyed; and the reign of this princess was happy, because it was a reign of *Love*, in which its chains and its slavery are liked!"

The origin of Raleigh's advancement in the queen's graces was by an act of gallantry. Raleigh spoiled a new plush cloak, while the queen, stepping cautiously on this prodigal's footcloth, shot forth a smile, in which he read promotion. Captain Raleigh soon became Sir Walter, and rapidly advanced in the queen's favour.

Hume has furnished us with ample proofs of the *passion* which her courtiers feigned for her, and which, it appears, never went further than boisterous or romantic gallantry. The secrecy of her amours is not so wonderful as it seems, if there were natural impediments to any but exterior gallantries, which seems not doubtful. Hume has preserved in his notes a letter written by Raleigh. It is a perfect amorous composition. After having exerted his poetic talents to exalt *her charms* and *his affection*, he concludes, by comparing

her majesty, who was then *sixty*, to Venus and Diana. Sir Walter was not her only courtier who wrote in this style. Even in her old age she affected a strange fondness for music and dancing, with a kind of childish simplicity; her court seemed a court of love, and she the sovereign. A curious anecdote in a letter of the times has reached us. Secretary Cecil, the youngest son of Lord Burleigh, seems to have perfectly entered into her character. Lady Derby wore about her neck and in her bosom a portrait; the queen, espying it, inquired about it, but her ladyship was anxious to conceal it. The queen insisted on having it; and discovering it to be the portrait of young Cecil, she snatched it away, and tying it upon her shoe, walked along with it; afterwards she pinned it on her elbow, and wore it some time there. Secretary Cecil hearing of this composed some verses, and got them set to music; this music the queen insisted on hearing. In his verses Cecil sang that he repined not, though her majesty was pleased to grace others; he contented himself with the favour she had given him, by wearing his portrait on her feet and on her elbow! The writer of the letter adds, "All these things are very secret." In this manner she contrived to lay the fastest hold on her able servants, and her servants on her.

Those who are intimately acquainted with the private anecdotes of those times know what encouragement this royal coquette gave to most who were near her person. Dodd, in his Church History, says, that the Earls of Arran and Arundel, and Sir William Pickering,

"were not out of hopes of gaining Queen Elizabeth's affections in a matrimonial way."

She encouraged every person of eminence: she even went so far, on the anniversary of her coronation, as publicly to take a ring from her finger, and put it on the Duke of Alençon's hand. She also ranked amongst her suitors Henry the Third of France, and Henry the Great.

She never forgave Buzenval for ridiculing her bad pronunciation of the French language; and when Henry IV. sent him over on an embassy, she would not receive him. So nice was the irritable pride of this great queen, that she made her private injuries matters of state.

"This queen," writes Du Maurier, in his *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de l'Hollande*, "who displayed so many heroic accomplishments, had this foible, of wishing to be thought beautiful by all the world. I heard from my father, that at every audience he had with her majesty, she pulled off her gloves more than a hundred times to display her hands, which indeed were very beautiful and very white."

A not less curious anecdote relates to the affair of the Duke of Anjou and our Elizabeth; it is one more proof of her partiality for handsome men. The writer was Lewis Guyon, a contemporary.

"Francis Duke of Anjou, being desirous of marrying a crowned head, caused proposals of marriage to be made to Elizabeth queen of England. Letters passed betwixt them, and their portraits were exchanged. At

length her majesty informed him, that she would never contract a marriage with any one who sought her, if she did not first *see his person*. If he would not come, nothing more should be said on the subject. This prince over-pressed by his young friends (who were as little able of judging as himself), paid no attention to the counsels of men of maturer judgment. He passed over to England without a splendid train. The said lady contemplated his *person :* she found him *ugly*, disfigured by deep scars of the *small-pox*, and that he also had an *ill-shaped nose*, with *swellings in the neck !* All these were so many reasons with her, that he could never be admitted into her good graces."

Puttenham, in his very rare book of the "Art of Poesie," p. 248, notices the grace and majesty of Elizabeth's demeanour, "her stately manner of walk, with a certaine granditie rather than gravietie, marching with leysure, which our soverein ladye and mistresse is accustomed to doe generally, unless it be when she walketh apace for her pleasure, or to catch her a heate in the cold mornings."

By the following extract from a letter from one of her gentlemen, we discover that her usual habits, though studious, were not of the gentlest kind, and that the service she exacted from her attendants was not borne without concealed murmurs. The writer groans in secrecy to his friend. Sir John Stanhope writes to Sir Robert Cecil in 1598 : "I was all the afternowne with her majestie, *at my booke ;* and then thinking to rest me, went in agayne with your letter.

She was pleased with the Filosofer's stone, and hath ben *all this daye reasonably quyett.* Mr. Grevell is absent, and I am tyed so as I cannot styrr, but shall be *at the wourse* for yt, these two dayes!"

Puttenham, p. 249, has also recorded an honourable anecdote of Elizabeth, and characteristic of that high majesty which was in her thoughts, as well as in her actions. When she came to the crown, a knight of the realm, who had insolently behaved to her when Lady Elizabeth, fell upon his knees and besought her pardon, expecting to be sent to the Tower: she replied mildly, "Do you not know that we are descended of the *lion*, whose nature is not to harme or prey upon the mouse, or any other such small vermin?"

Queen Elizabeth was taught to write by the celebrated *Roger Ascham.* Her writing is extremely beautiful and correct, as may be seen by examining a little manuscript book of prayers, preserved in the British Museum. I have seen her first writing-book preserved at Oxford in the Bodleian Library: the gradual improvement of her majesty's hand-writing is very honourable to her diligence; but the most curious thing is the paper on which she tried her pens; this she usually did by writing the name of her beloved brother Edward; a proof of the early and ardent attachment she formed to that amiable prince.

The education of Elizabeth had been severely classical; she thought and she wrote in all the spirit of the characters of antiquity; and her speeches and her letters are studded with apophthegms, and a terseness of ideas

and language, that give an exalted idea of her mind. In her evasive answers to the commons, in reply to their petitions to her majesty to marry, she has employed an energetic word. "Were I to tell you that I do not mean to marry, I might say less than I did intend; and were I to tell you that I do mean to marry, I might say more than it is proper for you to know; therefore I give you an *answer*, ANSWERLESS!"

THE CHINESE LANGUAGE.

THE Chinese language is like no other on the globe; it is said to contain not more than about 330 words, but it is by no means monotonous, for it has four accents; the even, the raised, the lessened, and the returning, which multiply every word into four; as difficult, says Mr. Astle, for an European to understand, as it is for a Chinese to comprehend the six pronunciations of the French E. In fact they can so diversify their monosyllabic words by the different *tones* which they give them, that the same character differently accented signifies sometimes ten or more different things.

P. Bourgeois, one of the missionaries, attempted, after ten months' residence at Pekin, to preach in the Chinese language. These are the words of the good father: "God knows how much this first Chinese sermon cost me! I can assure you this language resembles no other. The same word has never but one termination; and then adieu to all that in our declensions distinguishes the gender, and the number of things we

would speak: adieu, in the verbs, to all which might explain the active person, how and in what time it acts, if it acts alone or with others: in a word, with the Chinese, the same word is substantive, adjective, verb, singular, plural, masculine, feminine, &c. It is the person who hears who must arrange the circumstances, and guess them. Add to all this, that all the words of this language are reduced to three hundred and a few more; that they are pronounced in so many different ways, that they signify eighty thousand different things, which are expressed by as many different characters. This is not all: the arrangement of all these monosyllables appears to be under no general rule; so that to know the language after having learnt the words, we must learn every particular phrase: the least inversion would make you unintelligible to three parts of the Chinese.

"I will give you an example of their words. They told me *chou* signifies a *book:* so that I thought whenever the word *chou* was pronounced, a *book* was the subject. Not at all! *Chou*, the next time I heard it, I found signified a *tree*. Now I was to recollect, *chou* was a *book* or a *tree*. But this amounted to nothing; *chou*, I found, expressed also *great heats; chou* is to *relate; chou* is the *Aurora; chou* means to be *accustomed; chou* expresses the *loss of a wager*, &c. I should not finish, were I to attempt to give you all its significations.

"Notwithstanding these singular difficulties, could one but find a help in the perusal of their books, I should not complain. But this is impossible! Their language is quite different from that of simple conversation.

What will ever be an insurmountable difficulty to every European is the pronunciation; every word may be pronounced in five different tones, yet every tone is not so distinct that an unpractised ear can easily distinguish it. These monosyllables fly with amazing rapidity; then they are continually disguised by elisions, which sometimes hardly leave any thing of two monosyllables. From an aspirated tone you must pass immediately to an even one; from a whistling note to an inward one: sometimes your voice must proceed from the palate; sometimes it must be guttural, and almost always nasal. I recited my sermon at least fifty times to my servant before I spoke it in public; and yet I am told, though he continually corrected me, that of the ten parts of the sermon (as the Chinese express themselves), they hardly understood three. Fortunately the Chinese are wonderfully patient; and they are astonished that any ignorant stranger should be able to learn two words of their language."

It has been said that "Satires are often composed in China, which, if you attend to the *characters*, their import is pure and sublime; but if you regard the *tone* only, they contain a meaning ludicrous or obscene. In the Chinese *one word* sometimes corresponds to three or four thousand characters; a property quite opposite to that of our language, in which *myriads* of different *words* are expressed by the *same letters*."

MEDICAL MUSIC.

In the Philosophical Magazine for May, 1806, we find that "several of the medical literati on the continent are at present engaged in making inquiries and experiments upon the *influence of music in the cure of diseases.*" The learned Dusaux is said to lead the band of this new tribe of *amateurs* and *cognoscenti.*

The subject excited my curiosity, though I since have found that it is no new discovery.

There is a curious article in Dr. Burney's History of Music, "On the medicinal Powers attributed to Music by the Ancients," which he derived from the learned labours of a modern physician, M. Burette, who doubtless could play a tune to, as well as prescribe one to, his patient. He conceives that music can relieve the pains of the sciatica; and that independent of the greater or less skill of the musician, by flattering the ear, and diverting the attention, and occasioning certain vibrations of the nerves, it can remove those obstructions which occasion this disorder. M. Burette, and many modern physicians and philosophers, have believed that music has the power of affecting the mind, and the whole nervous system, so as to give a temporary relief in certain diseases, and even a radical cure. De Mairan, Bianchini, and other respectable names, have pursued the same career. But the ancients record miracles!

The Rev. Dr. Mitchell of Brighthelmstone wrote a dissertation, "*De Arte Medendi, apud Priscos Musices*

ope atque Carminum," printed for J. Nichols, 1783. He writes under the assumed name of Michael Gaspar; but whether this learned dissertator be grave or jocular, more than one critic has not been able to resolve me I suspect it to be a satire on the parade of Germanic erudition, by which they often prove a point by the weakest analogies and the most fanciful conceits.

Amongst half-civilised nations, diseases have been generally attributed to the influence of evil spirits. The depression of mind which is generally attendant on sickness, and the delirium accompanying certain stages of disease, seem to have been considered as especially denoting the immediate influence of a demon. The effect of music in raising the energies of the mind, or what we commonly call animal spirits, was obvious to early observation. Its power of attracting strong attention may in some cases have appeared to affect even those who laboured under a considerable degree of mental disorder. The accompanying depression of mind was considered as a part of the disease, perhaps rightly enough, and music was prescribed as a remedy to remove the symptom, when experience had not ascertained the probable cause. Homer, whose heroes exhibit high passions, but not refined manners, represents the Grecian army as employing music to stay the raging of the plague. The Jewish nation, in the time of King David, appear not to have been much further advanced in civilisation; accordingly we find David employed in his youth to remove the mental derangement of Saul by his harp. The method of cure was suggested as a common one in those days, by

Saul's servants ; and the success is not mentioned as a miracle. Pindar, with poetic licence, speaks of Æsculapius healing acute disorders with soothing songs ; but Æsculapius, whether man or deity, or between both, is a physician of the days of barbarism and fable. Pliny scouts the idea that music should affect real bodily injury, but quotes Homer on the subject ; mentions Theophrastus as suggesting a tune for the cure of the hip gout, and Cato as entertaining a fancy that it had a good effect when limbs were out of joint, and likewise that Varro thought it good for the gout. Aulus Gellius cites a work of Theophrastus, which recommends music as a specific for the bite of a viper. Boyle and Shakspeare mention the effects of music super vesicam. Kircher's "Musurgia," and Swinburne's Travels, relate the effects of music on those who are bitten by the tarantula. Sir W. Temple seems to have given credit to the stories of the power of music over diseases.

The ancients, indeed, record miracles in the tales they relate of the medicinal powers of music. A fever is removed by a song, and deafness is cured by a trumpet, and the pestilence is chased away by the sweetness of an harmonious lyre. That deaf people can hear best in a great noise is a fact alleged by some moderns, in favour of the ancient story of curing deafness by a trumpet. Dr. Willis tells us, says Dr. Burney, of a lady who could *hear* only while *a drum was beating*, insomuch that her husband, the account says, hired a drummer as her servant, in order to enjoy the pleasure of her conversation.

Music and the sounds of instruments, says the lively

Vigneul de Marville, contribute to the health of the body and the mind; they quicken the circulation of the blood, they dissipate vapours, and open the vessels, so that the action of perspiration is freer. He tells a story of a person of distinction, who assured him, that once being suddenly seized by violent illness, instead of a consultation of physicians, he immediately called a band of musicians; and their violins played so well in his inside, that his bowels became perfectly in tune, and in a few hours were harmoniously becalmed. I once heard a story of Farinelli the famous singer, who was sent for to Madrid, to try the effect of his magical voice on the king of Spain. His majesty was buried in the profoundest melancholy: nothing could raise an emotion in him; he lived in a total oblivion of life; he sate in a darkened chamber, entirely given up to the most distressing kind of madness. The physicians ordered Farinelli at first to sing in an outer room; and for the first day or two this was done, without any effect on the royal patient. At length it was observed, that the king, awakening from his stupor, seemed to listen; on the next day tears were seen starting in his eyes; the day after he ordered the door of his chamber to be left open—and at length the perturbed spirit entirely left our modern Saul, and the *medicinal voice* of Farinelli effected what no other medicine could.

I now prepare to give the reader some *facts*, which he may consider as a trial of credulity.—Their authorities are, however, not contemptible.—Naturalists assert that animals and birds, as well as "knotted oaks," as Con-

greve informs us, are sensible to the charms of music. This may serve as an instance :—An officer was confined in the Bastile; he begged the governor to permit him the use of his lute, to soften, by the harmonies of his instrument, the rigours of his prison. At the end of a few days, this modern Orpheus, playing on his lute, was greatly astonished to see frisking out of their holes great numbers of mice; and descending from their woven habitations, crowds of spiders, who formed a circle about him, while he continued breathing his soul-subduing instrument. He was petrified with astonishment. Having ceased to play, the assembly, who did not come to see his person, but to hear his instrument, immediately broke up. As he had a great dislike to spiders, it was two days before he ventured again to touch his instrument. At length, having overcome, for the novelty of his company, his dislike of them, he recommenced his concert, when the assembly was by far more numerous than at first; and in the course of farther time, he found himself surrounded by a hundred *musical amateurs*. Having thus succeeded in attracting this company, he treacherously contrived to get rid of them at his will. For this purpose he begged the keeper to give him a cat, which he put in a cage, and let loose at the very instant when the little hairy people were most entranced by the Orphean skill he displayed.

The Abbé Olivet has described an amusement of Pelisson during his confinement in the Bastile, which consisted in feeding a spider, which he had discovered forming its web in the corner of the small window.

For some time he placed his flies at the edge, while his valet, who was with him, played on a bagpipe: little by little, the spider used itself to distinguish the sound of the instrument, and issued from its hole to run and catch its prey. Thus calling it always by the same sound, and placing the flies at a still greater distance, he succeeded, after several months, to drill the spider by regular exercise, so that at length it never failed appearing at the first sound to seize on the fly provided for it, even on the knees of the prisoner.

Marville has given us the following curious anecdote on this subject. He says, that doubting the truth of those who say that the love of music is a natural taste, especially the sound of instruments, and that beasts themselves are touched by it, being one day in the country I tried an experiment. While a man was playing on the trump marine, I made my observations on a cat, a dog, a horse, an ass, a hind, cows, small birds, and a cock and hens, who were in a yard, under a window on which I was leaning. I did not perceive that the cat was the least affected, and I even judged, by her air, that she would have given all the instruments in the world for a mouse, sleeping in the sun all the time; the horse stopped short from time to time before the window, raising his head up now and then, as he was feeding on the grass; the dog continued for above an hour seated on his hind legs, looking steadfastly at the player; the ass did not discover the least indication of his being touched, eating his thistles peaceably; the hind lifted up her large wide ears, and seemed very attentive; the

cows slept a little, and after gazing, as though they had been acquainted with us, went forward; some little birds who were in an aviary, and others on the trees and bushes, almost tore their little throats with singing; but the cock, who minded only his hens, and the hens, who were solely employed in scraping a neighbouring dunghill, did not show in any manner that they took the least pleasure in hearing the trump marine.

A modern traveller assures us, that he has repeatedly observed in the island of Madeira that the lizards are attracted by the notes of music, and that he has assembled a number of them by the powers of his instrument. When the negroes catch them, for food, they accompany the chase by whistling some tune, which has always the effect of drawing great numbers towards them. Stedman, in his expedition to Surinam, describes certain sibyls among the negroes, who, among several singular practices, can charm or conjure down from the tree certain serpents, who will wreath about the arms, neck, and breast of the pretended sorceress, listening to her voice. The sacred writers speak of the charming of adders and serpents; and nothing, says he, is more notorious than that the eastern Indians will rid the houses of the most venomous snakes, by charming them with the sound of a flute, which calls them out of their holes. These anecdotes seem fully confirmed by Sir William Jones, in his dissertation on the musical modes of the Hindus.

"After food, when the operations of digestion and absorption give so much employment to the vessels,

that a temporary state of mental repose must be found, especially in hot climates, essential to health, it seems reasonable to believe that a few agreeable airs, either heard or played without effort, must have all the good effects of sleep, and none of its disadvantages; *putting the soul in tune*, as Milton says, for any subsequent exertion; an experiment often successfully made by myself. I have been assured by a credible eye-witness, that two wild antelopes used often to come from their woods to the place where a more savage beast, Sirájud-daulah, entertained himself with concerts, and that they listened to the strains with an appearance of pleasure, till the monster, in whose soul there was no music, shot one of them to display his archery. A learned native told me that he had frequently seen the most venomous and malignant snakes leave their holes upon hearing tunes on a flute, which, as he supposed, gave them peculiar delight. An intelligent Persian declared he had more than once been present, when a celebrated lutenist, surnamed Bulbul (i. e. the nightingale), was playing to a large company, in a grove near Schiraz, where he distinctly saw the nightingales trying to vie with the musician, sometimes warbling on the trees, sometimes fluttering from branch to branch, as if they wished to approach the instrument, and at length dropping on the ground in a kind of ecstasy, from which they were soon raised, he assured me, by a change in the mode."

Jackson of Exeter, in reply to the question of Dryden, "What passion cannot music raise or quell?" sarcas-

tically returns, "What passion *can* music raise or quell?" Would not a savage, who had never listened to a musical instrument, feel certain emotions at listening to one for the first time? But civilised man is, no doubt, particularly affected by *association of ideas*, as all pieces of national music evidently prove.

The RANS DES VACHES, mentioned by Rousseau in his Dictionary of Music, though without any thing striking in the composition, has such a powerful influence over the Swiss, and impresses them with so violent a desire to return to their own country, that it is forbidden to be played in the Swiss regiments, in the French service, on pain of death. There is also a Scotch tune, which has the same effect on some of our North Britons. In one of our battles in Calabria, a bagpiper of the 78th Highland regiment, when the light infantry charged the French, posted himself on the right, and remained in his solitary situation during the whole of the battle, encouraging the men with a famous Highland charging tune; and actually upon the retreat and complete rout of the French changed it to another, equally celebrated in Scotland upon the retreat of and victory over an enemy. His next-hand neighbour guarded him so well that he escaped unhurt. This was the spirit of the "Last Minstrel," who infused courage among his countrymen, by possessing it in so animated a degree, and in so venerable a character.

MINUTE WRITING.

The Iliad of Homer in a nutshell, which Pliny says that Cicero once saw, it is pretended might have been a fact, however to some it may appear impossible. Ælian notices an artist who wrote a distich in letters of gold, which he enclosed in the rind of a grain of corn.

Antiquity and modern times record many such penmen, whose glory consisted in writing in so small a hand that the writing could not be legible to the naked eye. Menage mentions, he saw whole sentences which were not perceptible to the eye without the microscope; pictures and portraits which appeared at first to be lines and scratches thrown down at random; one formed the face of the Dauphiness with the most correct resemblance. He read an Italian poem, in praise of this princess, containing some thousand verses, written by an officer in a space of a foot and a half. This species of curious idleness has not been lost in our own country; where this minute writing has equalled any on record. Peter Bales, a celebrated caligrapher in the reign of Elizabeth, astonished the eyes of beholders by showing them what they could not see; for in the Harleian MSS. 530, we have a narrative of "a rare piece of work brought to pass by Peter Bales, an Englishman, and a clerk of the chancery;" it seems by the description to have been the whole Bible "in an English walnut no bigger than a hen's egg. The nut holdeth the book: there are as many leaves in his little book as the great

Bible, and he hath written as much in one of his little leaves as a great leaf of the Bible." We are told that this wonderfully unreadable copy of the Bible was "seen by many thousands." There is a drawing of the head of Charles I. in the library of St. John's College at Oxford, wholly composed of minute written characters, which, at a small distance, resemble the lines of an engraving. The lines of the head, and the ruff, are said to contain the book of Psalms, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. In the British Museum we find a drawing representing the portrait of Queen Anne, not much above the size of the hand. On this drawing appear a number of lines and scratches, which the librarian assures the marvelling spectator includes the entire contents of a thin *folio*, which on this occasion is carried in the hand.

The learned Huet asserts that, like the rest of the world, he considered as a fiction the story of that indefatigable trifler who is said to have inclosed the Iliad in a nutshell. Examining the matter more closely, he thought it possible. One day this learned man trifled half an hour in demonstrating it. A piece of vellum, about ten inches in length and eight in width, pliant and firm, can be folded up, and enclosed in the shell of a large walnut. It can hold in its breadth one line, which can contain 30 verses, and in its length 250 lines. With a crow-quill the writing can be perfect. A page of this piece of vellum will then contain 7500 verses, and the reverse as much; the whole 15000 verses of the Iliad. And this he proved by using a piece of paper,

and with a common pen. The thing is possible to be effected; and if on any occasion paper should be most excessively rare, it may be useful to know that a volume of matter may be contained in a single leaf.

NUMERICAL FIGURES.

The learned, after many contests, have at length agreed that the numerical figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, usually called *Arabic*, are of *Indian* origin. The Arabians do not pretend to have been the inventors of them, but borrowed them from the Indian nations. The numeral characters of the Bramins, the Persians, and the Arabians, and other eastern nations, are similar. They appear afterwards to have been introduced into several European nations, by their respective travellers, who returned from the East. They were admitted into calendars and chronicles, but they were not introduced into charters, says Mr. Astle, before the sixteenth century. The Spaniards, no doubt, derived their use from the Moors who invaded them. In 1240, the Alphonsean astronomical tables were made by the order of Alphonsus X. by a Jew, and an Arabian; they used these numerals, from whence the Spaniards contend that they were first introduced by them.

They were not generally used in Germany until the beginning of the fourteenth century; but in general the forms of the ciphers were not permanently fixed there till after the year 1531. The Russians were strangers to them, before Peter the Great had finished his travels in the beginning of the present century.

The origin of these useful characters with the Indians and Arabians, is attributed to their great skill in the arts of astronomy and of arithmetic, which required more convenient characters than alphabetic letters, for the expressing of numbers.

Before the introduction into Europe of these Arabic numerals, they used alphabetical characters, or *Roman numerals*. The learned authors of the Nouveau Traité Diplomatique, the most valuable work on every thing concerning the arts and progress of writing, have given some curious notices on the origin of the Roman numerals. Originally men counted by their fingers; thus to mark the first four numbers they used an I, which naturally represents them. To mark the fifth, they chose a V, which is made out by bending inwards the three middle fingers, and stretching out only the thumb and the little finger; and for the tenth they used an X, which is a double V, one placed topsyturvy under the other. From this the progression of these numbers is always from one to five, and from five to ten. The hundred was signified by the capital letter of that word in Latin C—centum. The other letters D for 500, and M for a 1000, were afterwards added. They subsequently abbreviated their characters, by placing one of these figures before another; and the figure of less value before a higher number, denotes that so much may be deducted from a greater number; for instance, IV signifies five less one, that is four; IX ten less one, that is nine; but these abbreviations are not found amongst the ancient monuments. These numerical letters are still continued by us, in the accounts of our Exchequer.

That men counted originally by their fingers, is no improbable supposition; it is still naturally practised by the people. In semi-civilised states, small stones have been used, and the etymologists derive the words *calculate* and *calculation* from *calculus*, the Latin term for a pebble-stone, and by which they denominated their counters used for arithmetical computations.

Professor Ward, in a learned dissertation on this subject in the Philosophical Transactions, concludes that it is easier to falsify the Arabic ciphers than the Roman alphabetic numerals; when 1375 is dated in Arabic ciphers, if the 3 is only changed, three centuries are taken away; if the 3 is made into a 9 and take away the 1, four hundred years are added. Such accidents have assuredly produced much confusion among our ancient manuscripts, and still do in our printed books; which is the reason that Dr. Robertson in his histories has always preferred writing his dates in *words*, rather than confide them to the care of a negligent printer. Gibbon observes, that some remarkable mistakes have happened by the word *mil.* in MSS., which is an abbreviation for *soldiers*, or for *thousands*; and to this blunder he attributes the incredible numbers of martyrdoms, which cannot otherwise be accounted for by historical records.

ENGLISH ASTROLOGERS.

A BELIEF in judicial astrology can now only exist in the people, who may be said to have no belief at all;

for mere traditional sentiments can hardly be said to amount to a *belief*. But a faith in this ridiculous system in our country is of late existence; and was a favourite superstition with the Learned.

When Charles the First was confined, Lilly the astrologer was consulted for the hour which would favour his escape.

A story, which strongly proves how greatly Charles the Second was bigoted to judicial astrology, is recorded in Burnet's History of his Own Times.

The most respectable characters of the age, Sir William Dugdale, Elias Ashmole, Dr. Grew, and others, were members of an astrological club. Congreve's character of Foresight, in Love for Love, was then no uncommon person, though the humour now is scarcely intelligible.

Dryden cast the nativities of his sons; and, what is remarkable, his prediction relating to his son Charles took place. This incident is of so late a date, one might hope it would have been cleared up.

In 1670, the passion for horoscopes and expounding the stars prevailed in France among the first rank. The new-born child was usually presented naked to the astrologer, who read the first lineaments in its forehead, and the transverse lines in its hand, and thence wrote down its future destiny. Catherine de Medicis brought Henry IV., then a child, to old Nostradamus, whom antiquaries esteem more for his chronicle of Provence than his vaticinating powers. The sight of the reverend seer, with a beard which "streamed like a meteor

in the air," terrified the future hero, who dreaded a whipping from so grave a personage. One of these magicians having assured Charles IX. that he would live as many days as he should turn about on his heels in an hour, standing on one leg, his majesty every morning performed that solemn gyration; the principal officers of the court, the judges, the chancellors, and generals, likewise, in compliment, standing on one leg and turning round!

It has been reported of several famous for their astrologic skill, that they have suffered a voluntary death merely to verify their own predictions; this has been reported of *Cardan*, and *Burton*, the author of the Anatomy of Melancholy.

It is curious to observe the shifts to which astrologers are put when their predictions are not verified. Great *winds* were predicted, by a famous adept, about the year 1586. No unusual storms, however, happened. Bodin, to save the reputation of the art, applied it as a *figure* to some *revolutions* in the *state*, and of which there were instances enough at that moment. Among their lucky and unlucky days, they pretend to give those of various illustrious persons and of families. One is very striking.—Thursday was the unlucky day of our Henry VIII. He, his son Edward VI., Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, all died on a Thursday! This fact had, no doubt, great weight in this controversy of the astrologers with their adversaries.

Lilly, the astrologer, is the Sidrophel of Butler. His Life, written by himself, contains so much artless narra-

tive, and so much palpable imposture, that it is difficult to know when he is speaking what he really believes to be the truth. In a sketch of the state of astrology in his day, those adepts, whose characters he has drawn, were the lowest miscreants of the town. They all speak of each other as rogues and impostors. Such were Booker, Backhouse, Gadbury; men who gained a livelihood by practising on the credulity of even men of learning so late as in 1650, nor were they much out of date in the eighteenth century. In Ashmole's Life an account of these artful impostors may be found. Most of them had taken the air in the pillory, and others had conjured themselves up to the gallows. This seems a true statement of facts. But Lilly informs us, that in his various conferences with *angels*, their voice resembled that of the *Irish!*

The work contains anecdotes of the times. The amours of Lilly with his mistress are characteristic. He was a very artful man, and admirably managed matters which required deception and invention.

Astrology greatly flourished in the time of the civil wars. The royalists and the rebels had their *astrologers*, as well as their *soldiers!* and the predictions of the former had a great influence over the latter.

On this subject, it may gratify curiosity to notice three or four works, which bear an excessive price. The price cannot entirely be occasioned by their rarity, and I am induced to suppose that we have still adepts, whose faith must be strong, or whose scepticism but weak.

The Chaldean sages were nearly put to the rout by a quarto park of artillery, fired on them by Mr. John Chamber in 1691. Apollo did not use Marsyas more inhumanly than his scourging pen this mystical race, and his personalities made them feel more sore. However, a Norwich knight, the very Quixote of astrology, arrayed in the enchanted armour of his occult authors, encountered this pagan in a most stately carousal. He came forth with "A Defence of Judiciall Astrologye, in answer to a treatise lately published by Mr. John Chamber. By Sir Christopher Heydon, Knight; printed at Cambridge, 1603." This is a handsome quarto of about 500 pages. Sir Christopher is a learned writer, and a knight worthy to defend a better cause. But his Dulcinea had wrought most wonderfully on his imagination. This defence of this fanciful science, if science it may be called, demonstrates nothing, while it defends every thing. It confutes, according to the knight's own ideas: it alleges a few scattered facts in favour of astrological predictions, which may be picked up in that immensity of fabling which disgraces history. He strenuously denies, or ridicules, what the greatest writers have said against this fanciful art, while he lays great stress on some passages from authors of no authority. The most pleasant part is at the close, where he defends the art from the objections of Mr. Chamber by recrimination. Chamber had enriched himself by medical practice; and when he charges the astrologers with merely aiming to gain a few beggarly pence, Sir Christopher catches fire, and shows by his quotations, that if

we are to despise an art, by its professors attempting to subsist on it, or for the objections which may be raised against its vital principles, we ought by this argument most heartily to despise the medical science and medical men! He gives here all he can collect against physic and physicians; and from the confessions of Hippocrates and Galen, Avicenna and Agrippa, medicine appears to be a vainer science than even astrology! Sir Christopher is a shrewd and ingenious adversary; but when he says he means only to give Mr. Chamber oil for his vinegar, he has totally mistaken its quality.

The defence was answered by Thomas Vicars in his "Madnesse of Astrologers."

But the great work is by Lilly; and entirely devoted to the adepts. He defends nothing; for this oracle delivers his dictum, and details every event as matters not questionable. He sits on the tripod; and every page is embellished by a horoscope, which he explains with the utmost facility. This voluminous monument of the folly of the age is a quarto valued at some guineas! It is entitled, "Christian Astrology, modestly treated of in three books, by William Lilly, student in Astrology, 2nd edition, 1659." The most curious part of this work is "a Catalogue of most astrological authors." There is also a portrait of this arch rogue, and astrologer! an admirable illustration for Lavater!

Lilly's opinions, and his pretended science, were such favourites with the age, that the learned Gataker wrote professedly against this popular delusion. Lilly, at the head of his star-expounding friends, not only formally

replied to but persecuted Gataker annually in his predictions, and even struck at his ghost, when beyond the grave. Gataker died in July, 1654; and Lilly having written in his almanack of that year for the month of August this barbarous Latin verse:—

Hoc in tumbo jacet presbyter et nebulo!
Here in this tomb lies a presbyter and a knave!

he had the impudence to assert that he had predicted Gataker's death! But the truth is, it was an epitaph like lodgings to let; it stood empty ready for the first passenger to inhabit. Had any other of that party of any eminence died in that month, it would have been as appositely applied to him. But Lilly was an exquisite rogue, and never at a fault. Having prophesied in his almanac for 1650, that the parliament stood upon a tottering foundation, when taken up by a messenger, during the night he was confined, he contrived to cancel the page, printed off another, and showed his copies before the committee, assuring them that the others were none of his own, but forged by his enemies.

ALCHYMY.

Mrs. Thomas, the Corinna of Dryden, in her Life, has recorded one of the delusions of alchymy.

An infatuated lover of this delusive art met with one who pretended to have the power of transmuting lead to gold; that is, in their language, the *imperfect* metals to the *perfect one*. The hermetic philosopher required only the materials, and time, to perform his golden

operations. He was taken to the country residence of his patroness. A long laboratory was built, and that his labours might not be impeded by any disturbance, no one was permitted to enter into it. His door was contrived to turn on a pivot; so that, unseen and unseeing, his meals were conveyed to him without distracting the sublime meditations of the Sage.

During a residence of two years, he never condescended to speak but two or three times in the year to his infatuated patroness. When she was admitted into the laboratory, she saw, with pleasing astonishment, stills, immense caldrons, long flues, and three or four Vulcanian fires blazing at different corners of this magical mine; nor did she behold with less reverence the venerable figure of the dusty philosopher. Pale and emaciated with daily operations and nightly vigils, he revealed to her, in unintelligible jargon, his progresses; and having sometimes condescended to explain the mysteries of the arcana, she beheld, or seemed to behold, streams of fluid and heaps of solid ore scattered around the laboratory. Sometimes he required a new still, and sometimes vast quantities of lead. Already this unfortunate lady had expended the half of her fortune in supplying the demands of the philosopher. She began now to lower her imagination to the standard of reason. Two years had now elapsed, vast quantities of lead had gone in, and nothing but lead had come out. She disclosed her sentiments to the philosopher. He candidly confessed he was himself surprised at his tardy processes; but that now he would exert himself to the

utmost, and that he would venture to perform a laborious operation, which hitherto he had hoped not to have been necessitated to employ. His patroness retired, and the golden visions resumed all their lustre.

One day, as they sat at dinner, a terrible shriek, and one crack followed by another, loud as the report of cannon, assailed their ears. They hastened to the laboratory; two of the greatest stills had burst, and one part of the laboratory and the house were in flames. We are told that, after another adventure of this kind, this victim to alchymy, after ruining another patron, in despair swallowed poison.

Even more recently we have a history of an alchymist in the life of Romney, the painter. This alchymist, after bestowing much time and money on preparations for the grand projection, and being near the decisive hour, was induced, by the too earnest request of his wife, to quit his furnace one evening, to attend some of her company at the tea-table. While the projector was attending the ladies, his furnace blew up! In consequence of this event, he conceived such an antipathy against his wife, that he could not endure the idea of living with her again.

Henry VI., Evelyn observes in his Numismata, endeavoured to recruit his empty coffers by *alchymy*. The *record* of this singular proposition contains "the most solemn and serious account of the feasibility and virtues of the *philosopher's stone*, encouraging the search after it, and dispensing with all statutes and prohibitions to the contrary." This record was probably communi-

cated by Mr. Selden to his beloved friend Ben Jonson, when the poet was writing his comedy of the Alchymist.

After this patent was published, many promised to answer the king's expectations so effectually, that the next year he published *another patent;* wherein he tells his subjects, that the *happy hour* was drawing nigh, and by means of THE STONE, which he should soon be master of, he would pay all the debts of the nation in real *gold and silver*. The persons picked out for his new operators were as remarkable as the patent itself, being a most "miscellaneous rabble" of friars, grocers, mercers, and fishmongers!

This patent was likewise granted *auctoritate Parliamenti;* and is given by Prynne in his *Aurum Reginæ*, p. 135.

Alchymists were formerly called *multipliers*, although they never could *multiply;* as appears from a statute of Henry IV. repealed in the preceding record.

"None from henceforth shall use to *multiply* gold or silver, or use the *craft of multiplication;* and if any the same do, he shall incur the pain of felony." Among the articles charged on the Protector Somerset is this extraordinary one:—"You commanded *multiplication* and *alcumestry* to be practised, thereby *to abate the king's coin.*" Stowe, p. 601. What are we to understand? Did they believe that alchymy would be so productive of the precious metals as to *abate* the value of the coin; or does *multiplication* refer to an arbitrary rise in the currency by order of the government?

Every philosophical mind must be convinced that

alchymy is not an art, which some have fancifully traced to the *remotest times;* it may be rather regarded, when opposed to such a distance of time, as a modern imposture. Cæsar commanded the treatises of alchymy to be burnt throughout the Roman dominions: Cæsar, who is not less to be admired as a philosopher than as a monarch.

Mr. Gibbon has this succinct passage relative to alchymy: "The ancient books of alchymy, so liberally ascribed to Pythagoras, to Solomon, or to Hermes, were the pious frauds of more recent adepts. The Greeks were inattentive either to the use or the abuse of chemistry. In that immense register where Pliny has deposited the discoveries, the arts, and the errors of mankind, there is not the least mention of the transmutations of metals; and the persecution of Dioclesian is the first authentic event in the history of alchymy. The conquest of Egypt by the Arabs diffused that vain science over the globe. Congenial to the avarice of the human heart, it was studied in China, as in Europe, with equal eagerness and equal success. The darkness of the middle ages ensured a favourable reception to every tale of wonder; and the revival of learning gave new vigour to hope, and suggested more specious arts to deception. Philosophy, with the aid of experience, has at length banished the study of alchymy; and the present age, however desirous of riches, is content to seek them by the humbler means of commerce and industry."

Elias Ashmole writes in his diary—"May 13, 1653.

My father Backhouse (an astrologer who had adopted him for his son, a common practice with these men) lying sick in Fleet-street, over against St. Dunstan's church, and not knowing whether he should live or die, about eleven of the clock, told me in *syllables* the true matter of the *philosopher's stone*, which he bequeathed to me as a *legacy*." By this we learn that a miserable wretch knew the art of *making gold*, yet always lived a beggar; and that Ashmole really imagined he was in possession of the *syllables of a secret!* He has, however, built a curious monument of the learned follies of the last age, in his "Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum." Though Ashmole is rather the historian of this vain science than an adept, it may amuse literary leisure to turn over this quarto volume, in which he has collected the works of several English alchymists, subjoining his commentary. It affords a curious specimen of Rosicrucian mysteries; and Ashmole relates several miraculous stories. Of the philosopher's stone, he says he knows enough to hold his tongue, but not enough to speak. This stone has not only the power of transmuting any imperfect earthy matter into its utmost degree of perfection, and can convert the basest metals into gold, flints into stone, &c.; but it has still more occult virtues, when the arcana have been entered into by the choice fathers of hermetic mysteries. The vegetable stone has power over the natures of man, beast, fowls, fishes, and all kinds of trees and plants, to make them flourish and bear fruit at any time. The magical stone discovers any person wherever he is concealed; while the angelical

stone gives the apparitions of angels, and a power of conversing with them. These great mysteries are supported by occasional facts, and illustrated by prints of the most divine and incomprehensible designs, which we would hope were intelligible to the initiated. It may be worth showing, however, how liable even the latter were to blunder on these mysterious hieroglyphics. Ashmole, in one of his chemical works, prefixed a frontispiece, which, in several compartments, exhibited Phœbus on a lion, and opposite to him a lady, who represented Diana, with the moon in one hand and an arrow in the other, sitting on a crab; Mercury on a tripod, with the scheme of the heavens in one hand, and his caduceus in the other. These were intended to express the materials of the stone, and the season for the process. Upon the altar is the bust of a man, his head covered by an astrological scheme dropped from the clouds; and on the altar are these words, "Mercuriophilus Anglicus," i. e. the English lover of hermetic philosophy. There is a tree, and a little creature gnawing the root, a pillar adorned with musical and mathematical instruments, and another with military ensigns. This strange composition created great inquiry among the chemical sages. Deep mysteries were conjectured to be veiled by it. Verses were written in the highest strain of the Rosicrucian language. *Ashmole* confessed he meant nothing more than a kind of *pun* on his own name, for the tree was the *ash*, and the creature was a *mole*. One pillar tells his love of music and freemasonry, and the other his military preferment and astrological

studies! He afterwards regretted that no one added a second volume to his work, from which he himself had been hindered, for the honour of the family of Hermes, and "to show the world what excellent men we had once of our nation, famous for this kind of philosophy, and masters of so transcendent a secret."

Modern chemistry is not without a *hope*, not to say a *certainty*, of verifying the golden visions of the alchymists. Dr. Girtanner, of Gottingen, not long ago adventured the following prophecy: "In the *nineteenth century* the transmutation of metals will be generally known and practised. Every chemist and every artist will *make gold;* kitchen utensils will be of silver, and even gold, which will contribute more than any thing else to *prolong life*, poisoned at present by the oxides of copper, lead, and iron, which we daily swallow with our food." Phil. Mag. Vol. VI. p. 383. This sublime chemist, though he does not venture to predict that universal *elixir*, which is to prolong life at pleasure, yet approximates to it. A chemical friend writes to me, that "The *metals* seem to be *composite bodies*, which nature is perpetually preparing; and it may be reserved for the future researches of science to trace, and perhaps to imitate, some of these curious operations." Sir Humphry Davy told me that he did not consider this undiscovered art an impossible thing, but which, should it ever be discovered, would certainly be useless.

TITLES OF BOOKS.

Were it inquired of an ingenious writer what page of his work had occasioned him most perplexity, he would often point to the *title-page*. The curiosity which we there would excite, is, however, most fastidious to gratify.

Among those who appear to have felt this irksome situation, are most of our periodical writers. The "Tatler" and the "Spectator" enjoying priority of conception, have adopted titles with characteristic felicity; but perhaps the invention of the authors begins to fail in the "Reader," the "Lover," and the "Theatre!" Succeeding writers were as unfortunate in their titles, as their works; such are the "Universal Spectator," and the "Lay Monastery." The copious mind of Johnson could not discover an appropriate title, and indeed in the first "Idler," acknowledged his despair. The "Rambler" was so little understood, at the time of its appearance, that a French journalist has translated it "*Le Chevalier Errant;*" and when it was corrected to *L'Errant*, a foreigner drank Johnson's health one day, by innocently addressing him by the appellation of Mr. "Vagabond!" The "Adventurer" cannot be considered as a fortunate title; it is not appropriate to those pleasing miscellanies, for any writer is an adventurer. The "Lounger," the "Mirror," and even the "Connoisseur," if examined accurately, present nothing in the titles descriptive of the works. As for the "World," it

could only have been given by the fashionable egotism of its authors, who considered the world as merely a circuit round St. James's Street. When the celebrated father of all reviews, *Le Journal des Sçavans*, was first published, the very title repulsed the public. The author was obliged in his succeeding volumes to soften it down, by explaining its general tendency. He there assures the curious, that not only men of learning and taste, but the humblest mechanic, may find a profitable amusement. An English novel, published with the title of "The Champion of Virtue," could find no readers; but afterwards passed through several editions under the happier invitation of "The Old English Baron." "The Concubine," a poem by Mickle, could never find purchasers, till it assumed the more delicate title of "Sir Martyn."

As a subject of literary curiosity, some amusement may be gathered from a glance at what has been doing in the world, concerning this important portion of every book.

The Jewish and many oriental authors were fond of allegorical titles, which always indicate the most puerile age of taste. The titles were usually adapted to their obscure works. It might exercise an able enigmatist to explain their allusions; for we must understand by "The Heart of Aaron," that it is a commentary on several of the prophets. "The Bones of Joseph" is an introduction to the Talmud. "The Garden of Nuts," and "The Golden Apples," are theological questions; and "The Pomegranate with its Flower," is a treatise

of ceremonies, not any more practised. Jortin gives a title, which he says of all the fantastical titles he can recollect is one of the prettiest. A rabbin published a catalogue of rabbinical writers, and called it *Labia Dormientium*, from Cantic. vii. 9. "Like the best wine of my beloved that goeth down sweetly, causing *the lips of those that are asleep to speak*." It hath a double meaning, of which he was not aware, for most of his rabbinical brethren talk very much like *men in their sleep*.

Almost all their works bear such titles as bread—gold—silver—roses—eyes, &c.; in a word, any thing that signifies nothing.

Affected title-pages were not peculiar to the orientals: the Greeks and the Romans have shown a finer taste. They had their Cornucopias, or horns of abundance—Limones, or meadows—Pinakidions, or tablets—Pancarpes, or all sorts of fruits; titles not unhappily adapted for the miscellanists. The nine books of Herodotus, and the nine epistles of Æschines, were respectively honoured by the name of a Muse; and three orations of the latter, by those of the Graces.

The modern fanatics have had a most barbarous taste for titles. We could produce numbers from abroad, and at home. Some works have been called, "Matches lighted at the Divine Fire,"—and one "The Gun of Penitence:" a collection of passages from the fathers is called "The Shop of the Spiritual Apothecary:" we have "The Bank of Faith," and "The Sixpennyworth of Divine Spirit:" one of these works bears the following elaborate title; "Some fine Biscuits baked in the

Oven of Charity, carefully conserved for the Chickens of the Church, the Sparrows of the Spirit, and the sweet Swallows of Salvation." Sometimes their quaintness has some humour. Sir Humphrey Lind, a zealous puritan, published a work which a Jesuit answered by another, entitled "A pair of spectacles for Sir Humphrey Lind." The doughty knight retorted, by "A Case for Sir Humphrey Lind's Spectacles."

Some of these obscure titles have an entertaining absurdity; as "The Three Daughters of Job," which is a treatise on the three virtues of patience, fortitude, and pain. "The Innocent Love, or the Holy Knight," is a description of the ardours of a saint of the Virgin. "The Sound of the Trumpet," is a work on the day of judgment; and "A Fan to drive away Flies," is a theological treatise on purgatory.

We must not write to the utter neglect of our title; and a fair author should have the literary piety of ever having "the fear of his title-page before his eyes." The following are improper titles. Don Matthews, chief huntsman to Philip IV. of Spain, entitled his book "The Origin and Dignity of the Royal House," but the entire work relates only to hunting. De Chanterene composed several moral essays, which being at a loss how to entitle, he called "The Education of a Prince." He would persuade the reader in his preface, that though they were not composed with a view to this subject, they should not, however, be censured for the title, as they partly related to the education of a prince. The world were too sagacious to be duped; and the author in his

second edition acknowledges the absurdity, drops "the magnificent title," and calls his work "Moral Essays." Montaigne's immortal history of his own mind, for such are his "Essays," has assumed perhaps too modest a title, and not sufficiently discriminative. Sorlin equivocally entitled a collection of essays, "The Walks of Richelieu," because they were composed at that place; "the Attic Nights" of Aulus Gellius were so called, because they were written in Attica. Mr. Tooke in his grammatical "Diversions of Purley," must have deceived many.

A rodomontade title-page was once a great favourite. There was a time when the republic of letters was over-built with "Palaces of Pleasure," "Palaces of Honour," and "Palaces of Eloquence;" with "Temples of Memory," and "Theatres of Human Life," and "Amphitheatres of Providence;" "Pharoses, Gardens, Pictures, Treasures." The epistles of Guevara dazzled the public eye with their splendid title, for they were called "Golden Epistles;" and the "Golden Legend" of Voragine had been more appropriately entitled leaden.

They were once so fond of novelty, that every book recommended itself by such titles as "A new Method; new Elements of Geometry; the new Letter Writer, and the new Art of Cookery."

To excite the curiosity of the pious, some writers employed artifices of a very ludicrous nature. Some made their titles rhyming echoes; as this one of a father, who has given his works under the title of

Scalæ Alæ animi ; and *Jesus esus novus Orbis.* Some have distributed them according to the measure of time, as one Father Nadasi, the greater part of whose works are *years*, *months*, *weeks*, *days*, and *hours*. Some have borrowed their titles from the parts of the body ; and others have used quaint expressions, such as,— *Think before you leap—We must all die—Compel them to enter.* Some of our pious authors appear not to have been aware that they were burlesquing religion. One Massieu having written a moral explanation of the solemn anthems sung in Advent, which begin with the letter o, published this work under the punning title of *La douce Moelle, et la Sausse friande des* os *Savoureux de l'Avent.*

The Marquis of Carraccioli assumed the ambiguous title of *La Jouissance de soimeme.* Seduced by the epicurean title-page of self-enjoyment, the sale of the work was continual with the libertines, who, however, found nothing but very tedious essays on religion and morality. In the sixth edition the marquis greatly exults in his successful contrivance ; by which means he had punished the vicious curiosity of certain persons, and perhaps had persuaded some, whom otherwise his book might never have reached.

If a title be obscure, it raises a prejudice against the author ; we are apt to suppose that an ambiguous title is the effect of an intricate or confused mind. Baillet censures the Ocean Macro-micro-cosmick of one Sachs. To understand this title, a grammarian would send an inquirer to a geographer, and he to a natural philoso-

pher; neither would probably think of recurring to a physician, to inform one that this ambiguous title signifies the connexion which exists between the motion of the waters with that of the blood. He censures Leo Allatius for a title which appears to me not inelegantly conceived. This writer has entitled one of his books the *Urban Bees;* it is an account of those illustrious writers who flourished during the pontificate of one of the Barberinis. The allusion refers to the *bees* which were the arms of this family, and Urban VIII. is the Pope designed.

The false idea which a title conveys is alike prejudicial to the author and the reader. Titles are generally too prodigal of their promises, and their authors are contemned; but the works of modest authors, though they present more than they promise, may fail of attracting notice by their extreme simplicity. In either case, a collector of books is prejudiced; he is induced to collect what merits no attention, or he passes over those valuable works whose titles may not happen to be interesting. It is related of Pinelli, the celebrated collector of books, that the booksellers permitted him to remain hours, and sometimes days, in their shops to examine books before he purchased. He was desirous of not injuring his precious collection by useless acquisitions; but he confessed that he sometimes could not help being dazzled by magnificent titles, nor being mistaken by the simplicity of others, which had been chosen by the modesty of their authors. After all, many authors are really neither so vain, nor so honest,

as they appear; for magnificent, or simple titles, have often been given from the difficulty of forming any others.

It is too often with the Titles of Books, as with those painted representations exhibited by the keepers of wild beasts; where, in general, the picture itself is made more striking and inviting to the eye, than the inclosed animal is always found to be.

LITERARY FOLLIES.

The Greeks composed lypogrammatic works; works in which one letter of the alphabet is omitted. A lypogrammatist is a letter-dropper. In this manner Tryphiodorus wrote his Odyssey: he had not α in his first book, nor β in his second; and so on with the subsequent letters one after another. This Odyssey was an imitation of the lypogrammatic Iliad of Nestor. Among other works of this kind, Athenæus mentions an ode by Pindar, in which he had purposely omitted the letter S; so that this inept ingenuity appears to have been one of those literary fashions which are sometimes encouraged even by those who should first oppose such progresses into the realms of nonsense.

There is in Latin a little prose work of Fulgentius, which the author divides into twenty-three chapters, according to the order of the twenty-three letters of the Latin alphabet. From A to O are still remaining. The first chapter is without A; the second without B; the third without C; and so with the rest. There are

five novels in prose of Lopes de Vega; the first without A, the second without E, the third without I, &c. Who will attempt to verify them?

The Orientalists are not without this literary folly. A Persian poet read to the celebrated Jami a gazel of his own composition, which Jami did not like: but the writer replied, it was notwithstanding a very curious sonnet, for the *letter Aliff* was not to be found in any one of the words! Jami sarcastically replied, "You can do a better thing yet; take away *all the letters* from every word you have written."

To these works may be added the *Ecloga de Calvis*, by Hugbald the monk. All the words of this silly work begin with a C. It is printed in Dornavius. *Pugna Porcorum;* all the words beginning with a P, in the Nugæ Venales. *Canum cum cattis certanem*; the words beginning with a C: a performance of the same kind in the same work. Gregorio Leti presented a discourse to the Academy of the Humorists at Rome, throughout which he had purposely omitted the letter R, and he entitled it the exiled R. A friend having requested a copy, as a literary curiosity, for so he considered this idle performance, Leti, to show that this affair was not so difficult, replied by a copious answer of seven pages, in which he had observed the same severe ostracism against the letter R! Lord North, in the court of James I., has written a set of Sonnets, each of which begins with a successive letter of the alphabet. The Earl of Rivers in the reign of Edward IV. translated the Moral Proverbs of Christiana of

Pisa, a poem of about two hundred lines, the greatest part of which he contrived to conclude with the letter E; an instance of his lordship's hard application, and the bad taste of an age which, Lord Orford observes, had witticisms and whims to struggle with, as well as ignorance.

It has been well observed of these minute triflers, that extreme exactness is the sublime of fools, whose labours may be well called, in the language of Dryden,

> "Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry."

And Martial says,

> Turpe est difficiles habere nugas,
> Et stultus labor est ineptiarum.

Which we may translate,

> 'Tis a folly to sweat o'er a difficult trifle,
> And for silly devices invention to rifle.

I shall not dwell on the wits who composed verses in the forms of hearts, wings, altars, and true-love knots; or as Ben Jonson describes their grotesque shapes,

> "A pair of scissors and a comb in verse."

Tom Nash, who loved to push the ludicrous to its extreme, in his amusing invective against the classical Gabriel Harvey, tells us that "he had writ verses in all kinds; in form of a pair of gloves, a pair of spectacles, and a pair of pot-hooks, &c." They are not less absurd, who expose to public ridicule the name of their mistress by employing it to form their acrostics. I have seen

some of the latter, where *both sides* and *cross-ways*, the name of the mistress or the patron has been sent down to posterity with eternal torture. Where *one name* is made out *four times* in the same acrostic, the great difficulty must have been to have found words by which the letters forming the name should be forced to stand in their particular places. It might be incredible that so great a genius as Boccaccio could have lent himself to these literary fashions; yet one of the most gigantic of acrostics may be seen in his works; it is a poem of fifty cantos! Guinguenè has preserved a specimen in his Literary History of Italy, vol. iii. p. 54. Puttenham, in "The Art of Poesie," p. 75, gives several odd specimens of poems in the forms of lozenges, rhomboids, pillars, &c. Puttenham has contrived to form a defence for describing and making such trifling devices. He has done more: he has erected two pillars himself to the honour of Queen Elizabeth; every pillar consists of a base of eight syllables, the shaft or middle of four, and the capital is equal with the base. The only difference between the two pillars consists in this; in the one "ye must read upwards," and in the other the reverse. These pillars, notwithstanding this fortunate device and variation, may be fixed as two columns in the porch of the vast temple of literary folly.

It was at this period when *words* or *verse* were tortured into such fantastic forms, that the trees in gardens were twisted and sheared into obelisks and giants, peacocks, or flower-pots. In a copy of verses, "To a hair of my mistress's eye-lash," the merit, next to the choice

of the subject, must have been the arrangement, or the disarrangement, of the whole poem into the form of a heart. With a pair of wings many a sonnet fluttered, and a sacred hymn was expressed by the mystical triangle. *Acrostics* are formed from the initial letters of every verse; but a different conceit regulated *chronograms*, which were used to describe *dates*—the *numeral letters*, in whatever part of the word they stood, were distinguished from other letters by being written in capitals. In the following chronogram from Horace,

—feriam sidera vertice,

by a strange elevation of CAPITALS the *chronogrammatist* compels even Horace to give the year of our Lord thus,

—feriaM siDera VertIce. MDVI.

The Acrostic and the Chronogram are both ingeniously described in the mock Epic of the Scribleriad. The *initial letters* of the acrostics are thus alluded to in the literary wars:—

Firm and compact, in three fair columns wove,
O'er the smooth plain, the bold *acrostics* move;
High o'er the rest, the TOWERING LEADERS rise
With *limbs gigantic*, and *superior size.*

But the looser character of the *chronogram*, and the disorder in which they are found, are ingeniously sung thus:—

Not thus the *looser chronograms* prepare,
Careless their troops, undisciplined to war;
With *rank irregular*, *confused* they stand,
The CHIEFTAINS MINGLING with the vulgar band.

He afterwards adds others of the illegitimate race of wit:—

> To join these squadrons, o'er the champaign came
> A numerous race of no ignoble name;
> *Riddle* and *Rebus*, Riddle's dearest son,
> And *false Conundrum* and *insidious Pun.*
> *Fustian*, who scarcely deigns to tread the ground,
> And *Rondeau*, wheeling in repeated round.
> On their fair standards, by the wind display'd,
> *Eggs, altars, wings, pipes, axes*, were pourtray'd.

I find the origin of *Bouts-rimés*, or "Rhyming Ends," in Goujet's Bib. Fr. xvi. p. 181. One Dulot, a foolish poet, when sonnets were in demand, had a singular custom of preparing the rhymes of these poems to be filled up at his leisure. Having been robbed of his papers, he was regretting most the loss of three hundred sonnets: his friends were astonished that he had written so many which they had never heard. "They were *blank sonnets*," he replied; and explained the mystery by describing his *Bouts-rimés*. The idea appeared ridiculously amusing; and it soon became fashionable to collect the most difficult rhymes, and fill up the lines.

The *Charade* is of recent birth, and I cannot discover the origin of this species of logogriphes. It was not known in France so late as in 1771; in the great Dictionnaire de Trevoux, the term appears only as the name of an Indian sect of a military character. Its mystical conceits have occasionally displayed singular felicity.

Anagrams were another whimsical invention; with

the *letters* of any *name* they contrived to make out some entire word, descriptive of the character of the person who bore the name. These anagrams, therefore, were either satirical or complimentary. When in fashion, lovers made use of them continually: I have read of one, whose mistress's name was Magdalen, for whom he composed, not only an Epic under that name, but as a proof of his passion, one day he sent her three dozen of anagrams all on her lovely name. Scioppius imagined himself fortunate that his adversary *Scaliger* was perfectly *Sacrilege* in all the oblique cases of the Latin language; on this principle Sir John *Wiat* was made out, to his own satisfaction—*a wit*. They were not always correct when a great compliment was required; the poet *John Cleveland* was strained hard to make *Heliconian dew*. This literary trifle has, however, in our own times, produced several, equally ingenious and caustic.

Verses of grotesque shapes have sometimes been contrived to convey ingenious thoughts. Pannard, a modern French poet, has tortured his agreeable vein of poetry into such forms. He has made some of his Bacchanalian songs take the figures of *bottles*, and others of *glasses*. These objects are perfectly drawn by the various measures of the verses which form the songs. He has also introduced an *echo* in his verses which he contrives so as not to injure their sense. This was practised by the old French bards in the age of Marot, and this poetical whim is ridiculed by Butler in his Hudibras, Part I. Canto 3. Verse 190. I give an

example of these poetical echoes. The following ones are ingenious, lively, and satirical:—

Pour nous plaire, un plu*met*
Met
Tout en usage :
Mais on trouve sou*vent*
Vent
Dans son langage.

On y voit des Com*mis*
Mis
Comme des Princes,
Après être ve*nus*
Nuds
De leurs Provinces.

The poetical whim of Cretin, a French poet, brought into fashion punning or equivocal rhymes. Maret thus addressed him in his own way:—

L'homme, sotart, et *non sçavant*
Comme un Rotisseur, *qui lave oye*,
La faute d'autrui, *nonce avant*
Qu'il la cognoisse, ou *qu'il la voye*, &c.

Inthese lines of Du Bartas, this poet imagined that he imitated the harmonious notes of the lark: "the sound" is here, however, *not* "an echo to the sense."

La gentille aloüette, avec son tirelire,
Tirelire, à lire, et tireliran tire,
Vers la voute du ciel, puis son vol vers ce lieu,
Vire et desire dire adieu Dieu, adieu Dieu.

The French have an ingenious kind of Nonsense

Verses called *Amphigourie*. This word is composed of a Greek adverb signifying *about*, and of a substantive signifying *a circle*. The following is a specimen, elegant in the selection of words, and what the French called richly rhymed, but in fact they are fine verses without any meaning whatever. Pope's Stanzas, said to be written by a *person of quality*, to ridicule the tuneful nonsense of certain bards, and which Gilbert Wakefield mistook for a serious composition, and wrote two pages of Commentary to prove this song was disjointed, obscure, and absurd, is an excellent specimen of these *Amphigouries*.

AMPHIGOURIE.

Qu'il est heureux de se defendre
Quand le cœur ne s'est pas rendu!
Mais qu'il est facheux de se rendre
Quand le bonheur est suspendu!
Par un discours sans suite et tendre,
Egarez un cœur eperdu;
Souvent par un mal-entendu
L'amant adroit se fait entendre.

IMITATED.

How happy to defend our heart,
When Love has never thrown a dart!
But ah! unhappy when it bends,
If pleasure her soft bliss suspends!
Sweet in a wild disordered strain,
A lost and wandering heart to gain!
Oft in mistaken language wooed
The skilful lover's understood.

These verses have such a resemblance to meaning,

that Fontenelle having listened to the song imagined that he had a glimpse of sense, and requested to have it repeated. "Don't you perceive," said Madame Tencin, "that they are *Nonsense Verses?*" The malicious wit retorted, "They are so much like the fine verses I have heard here, that it is not surprising I should be for once mistaken."

In the "Scribleriad" we find a good account of *the Cento*. A Cento primarily signifies a cloak made of patches. In poetry it denotes a work wholly composed of verses, or passages promiscuously taken from other authors, only disposed in a new form or order, so as to compose a new work and a new meaning. Ausonius has laid down the rules to be observed in composing *Centos*. The pieces may be taken either from the same poet, or from several; and the verses may be either taken entire, or divided into two; one half to be connected with another half taken elsewhere; but two verses are never to be taken together. Agreeable to these rules he has made a pleasant nuptial *Cento* from Virgil.

The Empress Eudoxia wrote the life of Jesus Christ in centos taken from Homer; Proba Falconia from Virgil. Among these grave triflers may be mentioned Alexander Ross, who published "Virgilius Evangelizans, sive Historia Domini et Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi Virgilianis verbis et versibus descripta." It was republished in 1769.

A more difficult whim is that of "*Reciprocal Verses*," which give the same words whether read backwards or

forwards. The following lines by Sidonius Apollinaris were once infinitely admired;

"*Signa te signa temere me tangis et angis.*"
"*Roma tibi subito motibus ibit amor.*"

The reader has only to take the pains of reading the lines backwards, and he will find himself just where he was after all his fatigue.

Capitaine Lasphrise, a French self-taught poet, boasts of his inventions; among other singularities, one has at least the merit of *la difficulté vaincue*. He asserts this novelty to be entirely his own; the last word of every verse forms the first word of the following verse:

Falloit-il que le ciel me rendit amoureux,
Amoureux, jouissant d'une beauté craintive,
Craintive à recevoir la douceur excessive,
Excessive au plaisir qui rend l'amant heureux;
Heureux si nous avions quelques paisibles lieux,
Lieux ou plus surement l'ami fidelle arrive,
Arrive sans soupçon de quelque ami attentive,
Attentive à vouloir nous surprendre tous deux.—

Francis Colonna, an Italian Monk, is the author of a singular book entitled "The dream of Poliphilus," in which he relates his amours with a lady of the name of Polia. It was considered improper to prefix his name to the work; but being desirous of marking it by some peculiarity, that he might claim it at any distant day, he contrived that the initial letters of every chapter should be formed of those of his name, and of the subject he treats. This strange invention was not discovered till many years afterwards: when the wits employed

themselves in deciphering it, unfortunately it became a source of literary altercation, being susceptible of various readings. The correct appears thus: POLIAM FRATER FRANCISCUS COLUMNA PERAMAVIT. "Brother Francis Colonna passionately loved Polia." This gallant monk, like another Petrarch, made the name of his mistress the subject of his amatorial meditations; and as the first called his Laura, his Laurel, this called his Polia, his Polita.

A few years afterwards Marcellus Palingenius Stellatus employed a similar artifice in his ZODIACUS VITÆ, "The Zodiac of Life;" the initial letters of the first twenty-nine verses of the first book of this poem forming his name, which curious particular was probably unknown to Warton in his account of this work.—The performance is divided into twelve books, but has no reference to astronomy, which we might naturally expect. He distinguished his twelve books by the twelve names of the celestial signs, and probably extended or confined them purposely to that number, to humour his fancy. Warton however observes, "this strange pedantic title is not totally without a *conceit*, as the author was born at *Stellada* or *Stellata*, a province of Ferrara, and from whence he called himself Marcellus Palingenius Stellatus." The work itself is a curious satire on the Pope and the Church of Rome. It occasioned Bayle to commit a remarkable *literary blunder*, which I shall record in its place. Of Italian conceit in those times, of which Petrarch was the father, with his perpetual play on words and on his *Laurel*, or his mis-

tress *Laura*, he has himself afforded a remarkable example. Our poet lost his mother, who died in her thirty-eighth year: he has commemorated her death by a sonnet composed of thirty-eight lines. He seems to have conceived that the exactness of the number was equally natural and tender.

Are we not to class among *literary follies* the strange researches which writers, even of the present day, have made in *Antediluvian* times? Forgeries of the grossest nature have been alluded to, or quoted as authorities. A *book of Enoch* once attracted considerable attention; this curious forgery has been recently translated: the Sabeans pretend they possess a work written by *Adam!* and this work has been *recently* appealed to in favour of a visionary theory! Astle gravely observes, that "with respect to *Writings* attributed to the *Antediluvians*, it seems not only decent but rational to say that we know nothing concerning them." Without alluding to living writers, Dr. Parsons, in his erudite "Remains of Japhet," tracing the origin of the alphabetical character, supposes that *letters* were known to *Adam!* Some too have noticed astronomical libraries in the Ark of Noah! Such historical memorials are the deliriums of learning, or are founded on forgeries.

Hugh Broughton, a writer of controversy in the reign of James the First, shows us in a tedious discussion on Scripture chronology, that Rahab was a harlot at *ten* years of age; and enters into many grave discussions concerning the *colour* of Aaron's *Ephod*, and the language which *Eve* first spoke. This writer is ridiculed

in Ben Jonson's Comedies:—he is not without rivals even in the present day! Covarruvias, after others of his school, discovers that when male children are born they cry out with an A, being the first vowel of the word *Adam*, while the female infants prefer the letter E, in allusion to *Eve*; and we may add that, by the pinch of a negligent nurse, they may probably learn all their vowels. Of the pedantic triflings of commentators, a controversy among the Portuguese on the works of Camoens is not the least. Some of these profound critics who affected great delicacy in the laws of Epic poetry, pretended to be doubtful whether the poet had fixed on the right time for a *king's dream;* whether, said they, a king should have a propitious dream on his *first going to bed* or at the *dawn of the following morning?* No one seemed to be quite certain; they puzzled each other till the controversy closed in this felicitous manner, and satisfied both the night and the dawn critics. Barreto discovered that an *accent* on one of the words alluded to in the controversy would answer the purpose, and by making king Manuel's dream to take place at the dawn would restore Camoens to their good opinion, and preserve the dignity of the poet.

Chevreau begins his History of the World in these words: "Several learned men have examined in *what season* God created the world, though there could hardly be any season then, since there was no sun, no moon, nor stars. But as the world must have been created in one of the four seasons, this question has exercised the talents

of the most curious, and opinions are various. Some say it was in the month of *Nisan*, that is, in the spring: others maintain that it was in the month of *Tisri*, which begins the civil year of the Jews, and that it was on the *sixth day* of this month, which answers to our *September*, that *Adam* and *Eve* were created, and that it was on a *Friday*, a little after four o'clock in the afternoon!" This is according to the Rabbinical notion of the eve of the sabbath.

The Irish antiquaries mention *public libraries* that were before the flood; and Paul Christian Ilsker, with profounder erudition, has given an exact catalogue of *Adam's*. Messieurs O'Flaherty, O'Connor, and O'Halloran, have most gravely recorded as authentic narrations the wildest legendary traditions; and more recently, to make confusion doubly confounded, others have built up what they call theoretical histories on these nursery tales. By which species of black art they contrive to prove that an Irishman is an Indian, and a Peruvian may be a Welshman, from certain emigrations which took place many centuries before Christ, and some about two centuries after the flood! Keating, in his "History of Ireland," starts a favourite hero in the giant Partholanus, who was descended from Japhet, and landed on the coast of Munster 14th May, in the year of the world 1987. This giant succeeded in his enterprise, but a domestic misfortune attended him among his Irish friends:—his wife exposed him to their laughter by her loose behaviour, and provoked him to such a degree that he killed

two favourite greyhounds; and this the learned historian assures us was the *first* instance of female infidelity ever known in Ireland!

The learned, not contented with Homer's poetical pre-eminence, make him the most authentic historian and most accurate geographer of antiquity, besides endowing him with all the arts and sciences to be found in our Encyclopædia. Even in surgery a treatise has been written to show by the variety of the *wounds* of his heroes, that he was a most scientific anatomist; and a military scholar has lately told us that from him is derived all the science of the modern adjutant and quarter-master general; all the knowledge of *tactics* which we now possess; and that Xenophon, Epaminondas, Philip, and Alexander, owed all their warlike reputation to Homer!

To return to pleasanter follies. Des Fontaines, the journalist, who had wit and malice, inserted the fragment of a letter which the poet Rousseau wrote to the younger Racine whilst he was at the Hague. These were the words: "I enjoy the conversation within these few days of my associates in Parnassus. Mr. Piron is an excellent antidote against melancholy; *but*"—&c. Des Fontaines maliciously stopped at this *but*. In the letter of Rousseau it was, "but unfortunately he departs soon." Piron was very sensibly affected at this equivocal *but*, and resolved to revenge himself by composing one hundred epigrams against the malignant critic. He had written sixty before Des Fontaines died: but of these only two attracted any notice.

Towards the conclusion of the fifteenth century,

Antonio Cornezano wrote a hundred different sonnets on one subject; "the eyes of his mistress!" to which possibly Shakspeare may allude, when Jaques describes a lover, with his

"Woeful ballad,
Made to his mistress' eyebrow."

Not inferior to this ingenious trifler is Nicholas Franco, well known in Italian literature, who employed himself in writing two hundred and eighteen satiric sonnets, chiefly on the famous Peter Aretin. This lampooner had the honour of being hanged at Rome for his defamatory publications. In the same class are to be placed two other writers. Brebeuf, who wrote one hundred and fifty epigrams against a painted lady. Another wit, desirous of emulating him, and for a literary bravado, *continued* the same subject, and pointed at this unfortunate fair three hundred more, without once repeating the thoughts of Brebeuf! There is a collection of poems called "*La* PUCE *des grand jours de Poitiers.*" "The FLEA of the carnival of Poictiers." These poems were all written by the learned Pasquier upon a FLEA which he found one morning in the bosom of the famous Catherine des Roches!

Not long ago, a Mr. and Mrs. Bilderdik, in Flanders, published poems under the whimsical title of "White and Red."—His own poems were called white, from the colour of his hair; and those of his lady red, in allusion to the colour of the rose. The idea must be Flemish!

Gildon, in his "Laws of Poetry," commenting on this line of the Duke of Buckingham's "Essay on Poetry,"

"Nature's chief master-piece is *writing well*:"

very profoundly informs his readers "That what is here said has not the least regard to the *penmanship*, that is, to the fairness or badness of the hand-writing," and proceeds throughout a whole page, with a panegyric on a *fine hand-writing!* The stupidity of dullness seems to have at times great claims to originality!

Littleton, the author of the Latin and English Dictionary, seems to have indulged his favourite propensity to punning so far as even to introduce a pun in the grave and elaborate work of a Lexicon. A story has been raised to account for it, and it has been ascribed to the impatient interjection of the lexicographer to his scribe, who, taking no offence at the peevishness of his master, put it down in the Dictionary. The article alluded to is, "CONCURRO, to run with others; to run together; to come together; to fall foul on one another; to CON-*cur*, to CON-*dog*."

Mr. Todd, in his Dictionary, has laboured to show the "inaccuracy of this pretended narrative." Yet a similar blunder appears to have happened to Ash. Johnson, while composing his Dictionary, sent a note to the Gentleman's Magazine to inquire the etymology of the word *curmudgeon*. Having obtained the information, he records in his work the obligation to an anonymous letter-writer. "Curmudgeon, a vitious way of pronouncing *cœur mechant*. An unknown correspondent." Ash copied the word into his dictionary in this manner: "Curmudgeon: from the French *cœur*, unknown; and *mechant*, a correspondent." This singular negligence

ought to be placed in the class of our *literary blunders:* these form a pair of lexicographical anecdotes.

Two singular literary follies have been practised on Milton. There is a *prose version* of his "Paradise Lost," which was innocently *translated* from the French version of his Epic! One Green published a specimen of a *new version* of the "Paradise Lost" into *blank verse!* For this purpose he has utterly ruined the harmony of Milton's cadences, by what he conceived to be "bringing that amazing work somewhat *nearer the summit of perfection.*"

A French author, when his book had been received by the French Academy, had the portrait of Cardinal Richelieu engraved on his title-page, encircled by a crown of *forty rays*, in each of which was written the name of the celebrated *forty academicians.*

The self-exultations of authors, frequently employed by injudicious writers, place them in ridiculous attitudes. A writer of a bad dictionary, which he intended for a Cyclopædia, formed such an opinion of its extensive sale, that he put on the title-page the words "*first edition,*" a hint to the gentle reader that it would not be the last. Desmarest was so delighted with his "Clovis," an Epic Poem, that he solemnly concludes his preface with a thanksgiving to God, to whom he attributes all its glory! This is like that conceited member of a French parliament, who was overheard, after his tedious harangue, muttering most devoutly to himself, "*Non nobis Domine.*"

Several works have been produced from some odd coincidence with the *name of their authors.* Thus, De Saussay has written a folio volume, consisting of panegyrics of persons of eminence, whose christian names were *Andrew;* because *Andrew* was his own name. Two Jesuits made a similar collection of illustrious men whose christian names were *Theophilus* and *Philip*, being their own. *Anthony Sanderus* has also composed a treatise of illustrious *Anthonies!* And we have one *Buchanan*, who has written the lives of those persons who were so fortunate as to have been his namesakes.

Several forgotten writers have frequently been intruded on the public eye, merely through such trifling coincidences as being members of some particular society, or natives of some particular country. Cordeliers have stood forward to revive the writings of Duns Scotus, because he had been a Cordelier; and a Jesuit compiled a folio on the antiquities of a province, merely from the circumstance that the founder of his order, Ignatius Loyola, had been born there. Several of the classics are violently extolled above others, merely from the accidental circumstance of their editors having collected a vast number of notes, which they resolved to discharge on the public. County histories have been frequently compiled, and provincial writers have received a temporary existence, from the accident of some obscure individual being an inhabitant of some obscure town.

On such literary follies Malebranche has made this refined observation. The *critics*, standing in some way connected with *the author*, their *self-love* inspires them,

and abundantly furnishes eulogiums which the author never merited, that they may thus obliquely reflect some praise on themselves. This is made so adroitly, so delicately, and so concealed, that it is not perceived.

The following are strange inventions, originating in the wilful bad taste of the authors. Otto Venius, the master of Rubens, is the designer of *Le Theâtre moral de la Vie humaine*. In this emblematical history of human life, he has taken his subjects from Horace; but certainly his conceptions are not Horatian. He takes every image in a *literal* sense. If Horace says, "*Misce stultitiam* CONSILIIS BREVEM," behold, Venius takes *brevis* personally, and represents folly as a *little short child!* of not above three or four years old! In the emblem which answers Horace's "*Raro antecedentem scelestum deseruit* PEDE PŒNA CLAUDO," we find Punishment with *a wooden leg*.—And for "PULVIS ET UMBRA SUMUS," we have a dark burying vault, with *dust* sprinkled about the floor, and a *shadow* walking upright between two ranges of urns. For "*Virtus est vitium fugere, et sapientia prima stultitiâ caruisse*," most flatly he gives seven or eight Vices pursuing Virtue, and Folly just at the heels of Wisdom. I saw in an English Bible printed in Holland an instance of the same taste: the artist, to illustrate "Thou seest the *mote* in thy neighbour's eye, but not the *beam* in thine own," has actually placed an immense beam which projects from the eye of the caviller to the ground!

As a contrast to the too obvious taste of Venius, may be placed Cesare di Ripa, who is the author of an

Italian work, translated into most European languages, the *Iconologia;* the favourite book of the age, and the fertile parent of the most absurd offspring which Taste has known. Ripa is as darkly subtile as Venius is obvious; and as far-fetched in his conceits as the other is literal. Ripa represents Beauty by a naked lady, with her head in a cloud; because the true idea of beauty is hard to be conceived! Flattery, by a lady with a flute in her hand, and a stag at her feet, because stags are said to love music so much, that they suffer themselves to be taken, if you play to them on a flute. Fraud, with two hearts in one hand, and a mask in the other:—his collection is too numerous to point out more instances. Ripa also describes how the allegorical figures are to be coloured; Hope is to have a sky-blue robe, because she always looks towards heaven. Enough of these *capriccios!*

LITERARY CONTROVERSY.

In the article Milton, in the preceding volume, I had occasion to give some strictures on the asperity of literary controversy, drawn from his own and Salmasius's writings. If to some the subject has appeared exceptionable, to me, I confess, it seems useful, and I shall therefore add some other particulars; for this topic has many branches. Of the following specimens the grossness and malignity are extreme; yet they were employed by the first scholars in Europe.

Martin Luther was not destitute of genius, of learning,

or of eloquence; but his violence disfigured his works with singularities of abuse. The great reformer of superstition had himself all the vulgar ones of his day; he believed that flies were devils; and that he had had a buffeting with Satan, when his left ear felt the prodigious beating. Hear him express himself on the Catholic divines: "The Papists are all asses, and will always remain asses. Put them in whatever sauce you choose, boiled, roasted, baked, fried, skinned, beat, hashed, they are always the same asses."

Gentle and moderate, compared with a salute to his Holiness.—"The Pope was born out of the Devil's posteriors. He is full of devils, lies, blasphemies, and idolatries; he is anti-Christ; the robber of churches; the ravisher of virgins; the greatest of pimps; the governor of Sodom, &c. If the Turks lay hold of us, then we shall be in the hands of the Devil; but if we remain with the Pope, we shall be in hell.—What a pleasing sight would it be to see the Pope and the Cardinals hanging on one gallows in exact order, like the seals which dangle from the bulls of the Pope! What an excellent council would they hold under the gallows!"

Sometimes, desirous of catching the attention of the vulgar, Luther attempts to enliven his style by the grossest buffooneries: "Take care, my little Popa! my little ass! go on slowly: the times are slippery: this year is dangerous: if thou fallest, they will exclaim, See! how our little Pope is spoilt!" It was fortunate for the cause of the Reformation that the violence of Luther was softened in a considerable degree by the meek

Melancthon, who often poured honey on the sting inflicted by the angry wasp. Luther was no respecter of kings; he was so fortunate, indeed, as to find among his antagonists a crowned head; a great good fortune for an obscure controversialist, and the very *punctum saliens* of controversy. Our Henry VIII. wrote his book against the new doctrine: then warm from scholastic studies, Henry presented Leo X. with a work highly creditable to his abilities, according to the genius of the age. Collier, in his Ecclesiastical History, has analysed the book, and does not ill describe its spirit: "Henry seems superior to his adversary in the vigour and propriety of his style, in the force of his reasoning, and the learning of his citations. It is true he leans *too much* upon his character, argues in his *garter-robes*, and writes as 'twere with his *scepter*." But Luther in reply abandons his pen to all kinds of railing and abuse. He addresses Henry VIII. in the following style: "It is hard to say if folly can be more foolish, or stupidity more stupid, than is the head of Henry. He has not attacked me with the heart of a king, but with the impudence of a knave. This rotten worm of the earth having blasphemed the majesty of my king, I have a just right to bespatter his English majesty with his own dirt and ordure. This Henry has lied." Some of his original expressions to our Henry VIII. are these: "Stulta, ridicula, et verissimè *Henriciana* et *Thomistica* sunt hæc—Regem Angliæ Henricum istum planè mentiri, &c.—Hoc agit inquietus Satan, ut nos a Scripturis avocet per *sceleratos*

Henricos, &c."—He was repaid with capital and interest by an anonymous reply, said to have been written by Sir Thomas More, who concludes his arguments by leaving Luther in language not necessary to translate: "cum suis furiis et furoribus, cum suis merdis et stercoribus cacantem cacatumque." Such were the vigorous elegancies of a controversy on the Seven Sacraments! Long after, the court of Rome had not lost the taste of these "bitter herbs;" for in the bull of the canonisation of Ignatius Loyola in August, 1623, Luther is called *monstrum teterrimum et detestabilis pestis.*

Calvin was less tolerable, for he had no Melancthon! His adversaries are never others than knaves, lunatics, drunkards, and assassins! Sometimes they are characterised by the familiar appellatives of bulls, asses, cats, and hogs! By him Catholic and Lutheran are alike hated. Yet, after having given vent to this virulent humour, he frequently boasts of his mildness. When he reads over his writings, he tells us, that he is astonished at his forbearance; but this, he adds, is the duty of every Christian! at the same time, he generally finishes a period with—"Do you hear, you dog?" "Do you hear, madman?"

Beza, the disciple of Calvin, sometimes imitates the luxuriant abuse of his master. When he writes against Tilleman, a Lutheran minister, he bestows on him the following titles of honour: "Polyphemus; an ape; a great ass who is distinguished from other asses by wearing a hat; an ass on two feet; a monster composed

of part of an ape and wild ass; a villain who merits hanging on the first tree we find." And Beza was, no doubt, desirous of the office of executioner!

The Catholic party is by no means inferior in the felicities of their style. The Jesuit Raynaud calls Erasmus the "Batavian buffoon," and accuses him of nourishing the egg which Luther hatched. These men were alike supposed by their friends to be the inspired regulators of Religion!

Bishop Bedell, a great and good man, respected even by his adversaries, in an address to his clergy, observes, "Our calling is to deal with errors, not to disgrace the man with scolding words. It is said of Alexander, I think, when he overheard one of his soldiers railing lustily against Darius his enemy, that he reproved him, and added, 'Friend, I entertain thee to fight against Darius, not to revile him;' and my sentiments of treating the Catholics," concludes Bedell, "are not conformable to the practice of Luther and Calvin; but they were but men, and perhaps we must confess they suffered themselves to yield to the violence of passion."

The Fathers of the church were proficients in the art of abuse, and very ingeniously defended it. St. Austin affirms that the most caustic personality may produce a wonderful effect, in opening a man's eyes to his own follies. He illustrates his position with a story, given with great simplicity, of his mother Saint Monica with her maid. Saint Monica certainly would have been a confirmed drunkard, had not her maid timely and outrageously abused her. The story will amuse.—"My

mother had by little and little accustomed herself to relish wine. They used to send her to the cellar, as being one of the soberest in the family: she first sipped from the jug and tasted a few drops, for she abhorred wine, and did not care to drink. However, she gradually accustomed herself, and from sipping it on her lips she swallowed a draught. As people from the smallest faults insensibly increase, she at length liked wine, and drank bumpers. But one day being alone with the maid who usually attended her to the cellar, they quarrelled, and the maid bitterly reproached her with being a *drunkard!* That *single word* struck her so poignantly that it opened her understanding; and reflecting on the deformity of the vice, she desisted for ever from its use."

To jeer and play the droll, or, in his own words, *de bouffonner*, was a mode of controversy the great Arnauld defended as permitted by the writings of the holy fathers. It is still more singular, when he not only brings forward as an example of this ribaldry, Elijah *mocking* at the false divinities, but *God* himself *bantering* the first man after his fall. He justifies the injurious epithets which he has so liberally bestowed on his adversaries by the example of Jesus Christ and the apostles! It was on these grounds also that the celebrated Pascal apologised for the invectives with which he has occasionally disfigured his Provincial Letters. A Jesuit has collected "An Alphabetical Catalogue of the Names of *Beasts* by which the Fathers characterised the Heretics!" It may be found in *Erotemata de malis ac bonis Libris*, p. 93, 4to. 1653, of Father Raynaud. This list of brutes

and insects, among which are a vast variety of serpents, is accompanied by the names of the heretics designated!

Henry Fitzsermon, an Irish Jesuit, was imprisoned for his papistical designs and seditious preaching. During his confinement he proved himself to be a great amateur of controversy. He said, "he felt like a *bear* tied to a stake, and wanted somebody to *bait* him." A kind office, zealously undertaken by the learned *Usher*, then a young man. He *engaged* to *dispute* with him *once a week* on the subject of *antichrist!* They met several times. It appears that *our bear* was out-worried, and declined any further *dog-baiting*. This spread an universal joy through the Protestants in Dublin. At the early period of the Reformation, Dr. Smith of Oxford abjured papistry, with the hope of retaining his professorship, but it was given to Peter Martyr. On this our Doctor recants, and wrote several controversial works against Peter Martyr; the most curious part of which is the singular mode adopted of attacking others, as well as Peter Martyr. In his margin he frequently breaks out, thus: "Let Hoper read this!"—"Here Ponet open your eyes and see your errors!"—"Ergo Cox, thou art damned!" In this manner, without expressly writing against these persons, the stirring polemic contrived to keep up a sharp bush-fighting in his margins. Such was the spirit of those times, very different from our own. When a modern bishop was just advanced to a mitre, his bookseller begged to re-publish a popular theological tract of his against another bishop, because he might now meet him on

equal terms. My lord answered—"Mr. * * * no more controversy now!" Our good bishop resembled Baldwin, who, from a simple monk, arrived to the honour of the see of Canterbury. The successive honours successively changed his manners. Urban the Second inscribed his brief to him in this concise description—*Balduino Monastico ferventissimo, Abbate calido, Episcopo tepido, Archiepiscopo remisso!*

On the subject of literary controversies we cannot pass over the various sects of the scholastics: a volume might be compiled of their ferocious wars, which in more than one instance were accompanied by stones and daggers. The most memorable, on account of the extent, the violence, and duration of their contests, are those of the NOMINALISTS and the REALISTS.

It was a most subtle question assuredly, and the world thought for a long while that their happiness depended on deciding, whether universals, that is *genera*, have a real essence, and exist independent of particulars, that is *species:*—whether, for instance, we could form an idea of asses, prior to individual asses? Rosseline, in the eleventh century, adopted the opinion that universals have no real existence, either before, or in individuals, but are mere names and words by which the kind of individuals is expressed; a tenet propagated by Abelard, which produced the sect of the *Nominalists*. But the *Realists* asserted that universals existed independent of individuals,—though they were somewhat divided between the various opinions of Plato and Aristotle. Of the Realists the most famous were

Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus. The cause of the Nominalists was almost desperate, till Occam in the fourteenth century revived the dying embers. Louis XI. adopted the Nominalists, and the Nominalists flourished at large in France and Germany; but unfortunately Pope John XXIII. patronised the Realists, and throughout Italy it was dangerous for a Nominalist to open his lips. The French King wavered, and the Pope triumphed; his majesty published an edict in 1474, in which he silenced for ever the Nominalists, and ordered their books to be fastened up in their libraries with iron chains, that they might not be read by young students! The leaders of that sect fled into England and Germany, where they united their forces with Luther and the first Reformers.

Nothing could exceed the violence with which these disputes were conducted. Vives himself, who witnessed the contests, says that, "when the contending parties had exhausted their stock of verbal abuse, they often came to blows; and it was not uncommon in these quarrels about *universals*, to see the combatants engaging not only with their fists, but with clubs and swords, so that many have been wounded and some killed."

On this war of words and all this terrifying nonsense John of Salisbury observes, "that there had been more time consumed than the Cæsars had employed in making themselves masters of the world; that the riches of Crœsus were inferior to the treasures that had been exhausted in this controversy; and that the contending

parties, after having spent their whole lives in this single point, had neither been so happy as to determine it to their satisfaction, nor to find in the labyrinths of science where they had been groping any discovery that was worth the pains they had taken." It may be added that Ramus having attacked Aristotle, for "teaching us chimeras," all his scholars revolted; the parliament put a stop to his lectures, and at length having brought the matter into a law court, he was declared "to be insolent and daring"—the king proscribed his works, he was ridiculed on the stage, and hissed at by his scholars. When at length, during the plague, he opened again his schools, he drew on himself a fresh storm by reforming the pronunciation of the letter Q, which they then pronounced like K—Kiskis for Quisquis, and Kamkam for Quamquam. This innovation was once more laid to his charge: a new rebellion! and a new ejection of the Anti-Aristotelian! The brother of that Gabriel Harvey who was the friend of Spenser, and with Gabriel had been the whetstone of the town-wits of his time, distinguished himself by his wrath against the Stagyrite. After having with Gabriel predicted an earthquake, and alarmed the kingdom, which never took place (that is the earthquake, not the alarm), the wits buffeted him. Nash says of him, that "Tarlton at the theatre made jests of him, and Elderton consumed his ale-crammed nose to nothing, in bear-baiting him with whole bundles of ballads." Marlow declared him to be "an ass fit only to preach of the iron age." Stung to madness by this lively nest of hornets, he avenged himself in a very

cowardly manner—he attacked Aristotle himself! for he set *Aristotle* with his *heels upwards* on the school gates at Cambridge, and with *asses' ears* on his head!

But this controversy concerning Aristotle and the school divinity was even prolonged. A professor in the College at Naples, published in 1688 four volumes of peripatetic philosophy, to establish the principles of Aristotle. The work was exploded, and he wrote an abusive treatise under the *Nom de guerre* of Benedetto Aletino. A man of letters, Constantino Grimaldi, replied. Aletino rejoined; he wrote letters, an apology for the letters, and would have written more for Aristotle than Aristotle himself perhaps would have done. However, Grimaldi was no ordinary antagonist, and not to be outwearied. He had not only the best of the argument, but he was resolved to tell the world so, as long as the world would listen. Whether he killed off Father Benedictis, the first author, is not affirmed; but the latter died during the controversy. Grimaldi, however, afterwards pursued his ghost, and buffeted the father in his grave. This enraged the University of Naples; and the Jesuits, to a man, denounced Grimaldi to Pope Benedict XIII. and to the viceroy of Naples. On this the Pope issued a bull prohibiting the reading of Grimaldi's works, or keeping them, under pain of excommunication, and the viceroy, more active than the bull, caused all the copies which were found in the author's house to be thrown *into the sea!* The author with tears in his eyes beheld his expatriated volumes, hopeless that their voyage would have been successful.

However, all the little family of the Grimaldis were not drowned—for a storm arose, and happily drove ashore many of the floating copies, and these falling into charitable hands, the heretical opinions of poor Grimaldi against Aristotle and school divinity were still read by those who were not out-terrified by the Pope's bulls. The *salted* passages were still at hand, and quoted with a double zest against the Jesuits!

We now turn to writers whose controversy was kindled only by subjects of polite literature. The particulars form a curious picture of the taste of the age.

"There is," says Joseph Scaliger, that great critic and reviler, "an art of abuse or slandering, of which those that are ignorant may be said to defame others much less than they show a willingness to defame."

"Literary wars," says Bayle, "are sometimes as lasting as they are terrible." A disputation between two great scholars was so interminably violent, that it lasted thirty years! He humorously compares its duration to the German war which lasted as long.

Baillet, when he refuted the sentiments of a certain author, always did it without naming him; but when he found any observation which he deemed commendable, he quoted his name. Bayle observes, that "this is an excess of politeness, prejudicial to that freedom which should ever exist in the republic of letters; that it should be allowed always to name those whom we refute; and that it is sufficient for this purpose that we banish asperity, malice, and indecency."

After these preliminary observations, I shall bring forward various examples where this excellent advice is by no means regarded.

Erasmus produced a dialogue, in which he ridiculed those scholars who were servile imitators of Cicero; so servile, that they would employ no expression but what was found in the works of that writer; every thing with them was Ciceronianised. This dialogue is written with great humour. Julius Cæsar Scaliger, the father, who was then unknown to the world, had been long looking for some occasion to distinguish himself; he now wrote a defence of Cicero, but which in fact was one continued invective against Erasmus: he there treats the latter as illiterate, a drunkard, an impostor, an apostate, a hangman, a demon hot from hell! The same Scaliger, acting on the same principle of distinguishing himself at the cost of others, attacked Cardan's best work *De Subtilitate:* his criticism did not appear till seven years after the first edition of the work, and then he obstinately stuck to that edition, though Cardan had corrected it in subsequent ones; but this Scaliger chose, that he might have a wider field for his attack. After this, a rumour spread that Cardan had died of vexation from our Julius Cæsar's invincible pen; then Scaliger pretended to feel all the regret possible for a man he had killed, and whom he now praised: however, his regret had as little foundation as his triumph; for Cardan outlived Scaliger many years, and valued his criticisms too cheaply to have suffered them to have disturbed his quiet. All this does not exceed the *Invectives* of Poggius,

who has thus entitled several literary libels composed against some of his adversaries, Laurentius Valla, Philelphus, &c., who returned the poisoned chalice to his own lips; declamations of scurrility, obscenity, and calumny!

Scioppius was a worthy successor of the Scaligers: his favourite expression was, that he had trodden down his adversary.

Scioppius was a critic, as skilful as Salmasius or Scaliger, but still more learned in the language of abuse. This cynic was the Attila of authors. He boasted that he had occasioned the deaths of Casaubon and Scaliger. Detested and dreaded as the public scourge, Scioppius, at the close of his life, was fearful he should find no retreat in which he might be secure.

The great Casaubon employs the dialect of St. Giles's in his furious attacks on the learned Dalechamps, the Latin translator of Athenæus. To this great physician he stood more deeply indebted than he chose to confess; and to conceal the claims of this literary creditor, he called out *Vesanum! Insanum! Tiresiam!* &c. It was the fashion of that day with the ferocious heroes of the literary republic, to overwhelm each other with invectives, and to consider that their own grandeur consisted in the magnitude of their volumes; and their triumphs in reducing their brother giants into puny dwarfs. In science, Linnæus had a dread of controversy —conqueror or conquered we cannot escape without disgrace! Mathiolus would have been the great man of his day, had he not meddled with such matters. Who

is gratified by "the mad Cornarus," or "the flayed Fox?" titles which Fuchsius and Cornarus, two eminent botanists, have bestowed on each other. Some who were too fond of controversy, as they grew wiser, have refused to take up the gauntlet.

The heat and acrimony of verbal critics have exceeded description. Their stigmas and anathemas have been long known to bear no proportion against the offences to which they have been directed. "God confound you," cried one grammarian to another, "for your theory of impersonal verbs!" There was a long and terrible controversy formerly, whether the Florentine dialect was to prevail over the others. The academy was put to great trouble, and the Anti-cruscans were often on the point of annulling this supremacy; *una mordace scritura* was applied to one of these literary canons; and in a letter of those times the following paragraph appears: "Pescetti is preparing to give a second answer to Beni, which will not please him; I now believe the prophecy of Cavalier Tedeschi will be verified, and that this controversy, begun with pens, will end with poniards!"

Fabretti, an Italian, wrote furiously against Gronovius, whom he calls *Grunnovius:* he compared him to all those animals whose voice was expressed by the word *Grunnire, to grunt.* Gronovius was so malevolent a critic, that he was distinguished by the title of the "Grammatical Cur."

When critics venture to attack the person as well as the performance of an author, I recommend the salutary proceedings of Huberus, the writer of an esteemed

Universal History. He had been so roughly handled by Perizonius, that he obliged him to make the *amende honorable* in a court of justice; where, however, I fear an English jury would give the smallest damages.

Certain authors may be distinguished by the title of LITERARY BOBADILS, or fighting authors. One of our own celebrated writers drew his sword on a reviewer; and another, when his farce was condemned, offered to fight any one of the audience who hissed. Scudery, brother of the celebrated Mademoiselle Scudery, was a true Parnassian bully. The first publication which brought him into notice was his edition of the works of his friend Theophile. He concludes the preface with these singular expressions—"I do not hesitate to declare, that, amongst all the dead, and all the living, there is no person who has any thing to show that approaches the force of this vigorous genius; but if amongst the latter, any one were so extravagant as to consider that I detract from his imaginary glory, to show him that I fear as little as I esteem him, this is to inform him, that my name is

DE SCUDERY."

A similar rhodomontade is that of Claude Trellon, a poetical soldier, who begins his poems by challenging the critics; assuring them that if any one attempts to censure him, he will only condescend to answer sword in hand. Father Macedo, a Portuguese Jesuit, having written against Cardinal Norris, on the monkery of St. Austin, it was deemed necessary to silence both parties. Macedo, compelled to relinquish the pen, sent

his adversary a challenge, and according to the laws of chivalry, appointed a place for meeting in the wood of Boulogne. Another edict to forbid the duel! Macedo then murmured at his hard fate, which would not suffer him, for the sake of St. Austin, for whom he had a particular regard, to spill neither his *ink* nor his *blood*.

Anti, prefixed to the name of the person attacked, was once a favourite title to books of literary controversy. With a critical review of such books Baillet has filled a quarto volume; yet such was the abundant harvest, that he left considerable gleanings for posterior industry.

Anti-Gronovius was a book published against Gronovius, by Kuster. Perizonius, another pugilist of literature, entered into this dispute on the subject of the Æs grave of the ancients, to which Kuster had just adverted at the close of his volume. What was the consequence? Dreadful!—Answers and rejoinders from both, in which they bespattered each other with the foulest abuse. A journalist pleasantly blames this acrimonious controversy. He says, "To read the pamphlets of a Perizonius and a Kuster on the Æs grave of the ancients, who would not renounce all commerce with antiquity? It seems as if an Agamemnon and an Achilles were railing at each other. Who can refrain from laughter, when one of these commentators even points his attacks at the very name of his adversary? According to Kuster, the name of Perizonius signifies a *certain part* of the human body. How is it possible, that with such a name he could be right concerning the Æs grave?

But does that of Kuster promise a better thing, since it signifies a beadle; a man who drives dogs out of churches?—What madness is this!"

Corneille, like our Dryden, felt the acrimony of literary irritation. To the critical strictures of D'Aubignac it is acknowledged he paid the greatest attention, for, after this critic's *Pratique du Théâtre* appeared, his tragedies were more artfully conducted. But instead of mentioning the critic with due praise, he preserved an ungrateful silence. This occasioned a quarrel between the poet and the critic, in which the former exhaled his bile in several abusive epigrams, which have, fortunately for his credit, not been preserved in his works.

The lively Voltaire could not resist the charm of abusing his adversaries. We may smile when he calls a blockhead, a blockhead; a dotard, a dotard; but when he attacks, for a difference of opinion, the *morals* of another man, our sensibility is alarmed. A higher tribunal than that of criticism is to decide on the *actions* of men.

There is a certain disguised malice, which some writers have most unfairly employed in characterising a contemporary. Burnet called Prior, *one Prior*. In Bishop Parker's History of his own Times, an innocent reader may start at seeing the celebrated Marvell described as an outcast of society; an infamous libeller; and one whose talents were even more despicable than his person. To such lengths did the hatred of party, united with personal rancour, carry this bishop, who

was himself the worst of time-servers. He was, however, amply repaid by the keen wit of Marvell in "The Rehearsal transposed," which may still be read with delight, as an admirable effusion of banter, wit, and satire. Le Clerc, a cool ponderous Greek critic, quarrelled with Boileau about a passage in Longinus, and several years afterwards, in revising Moreri's Dictionary, gave a short sarcastic notice of the poet's brother; in which he calls him the elder brother of *him who has written the book entitled "Satires of Mr. Boileau D'Espreaux!"*—the works of the modern Horace, which were then delighting Europe, he calls, with simple impudence, a book entitled Satires!

The works of Homer produced a controversy, both long and virulent, amongst the wits of France. This literary quarrel is of some note in the annals of literature, since it has produced two valuable books; La Motte's "Reflexions sur la Critique," and Madame Dacier's "Des Causes de la Corruption de Goût." La Motte wrote with feminine delicacy, and Madame Dacier like an University pedant. "At length by the efforts of Valincour, the friend of art, of artists, and of peace, the contest was terminated." Both parties were formidable in number, and to each he made remonstrances, and applied reproaches. La Motte and Madame Dacier, the opposite leaders, were convinced by his arguments, made reciprocal concessions, and concluded a peace. The treaty was formally ratified at a dinner, given on the occasion by a Madame De Staël, who represented "Neutrality." Libations were poured to the memory of old Homer, and the parties were reconciled.

When Dante published his "Inferno," the simplicity of the age accepted it as a true narrative of his descent into hell.

When the Utopia of Sir Thomas More was first published, it occasioned a pleasant mistake. This political romance represents a perfect, but visionary republic, in an island supposed to have been newly discovered in America. "As this was the age of discovery," says Granger, "the learned Budæus, and others, took it for a genuine history; and considered it as highly expedient, that missionaries should be sent thither, in order to convert so wise a nation to Christianity."

It was a long while after publication that many readers were convinced that Gulliver's Travels were fictitious.

But the most singular blunder was produced by the ingenious "Hermippus Redivivus" of Dr. Campbell, a curious banter on the hermetic philosophy, and the universal medicine; but the grave irony is so closely kept up, that it deceived for a length of time the most learned. His notion of the art of prolonging life, by inhaling the breath of young women, was eagerly credited. A physician, who himself had composed a treatise on health, was so influenced by it, that he actually took lodgings at a female boarding-school, that he might never be without a constant supply of the breath of young ladies. Mr. Thicknesse seriously adopted the project. Dr. Kippis acknowledged that after he had read the work in his youth, the reasonings and the facts left him several

days in a kind of fairy land. I have a copy with manuscript notes by a learned physician, who seems to have had no doubts of its veracity. After all, the intention of the work was long doubtful; till Dr. Campbell assured a friend it was a mere jeu d'esprit; that Bayle was considered as standing without a rival in the art of treating at large a difficult subject, without discovering to which side his own sentiments leaned. Campbell had read more uncommon books than most men, and wished to rival Bayle, and at the same time to give many curious matters little known.

Palavicini, in his History of the Council of Trent, to confer an honour on M. Lansac, ambassador of Charles IX. to that council, bestows on him a collar of the order of the Saint Esprit; but which order was not instituted till several years afterwards by Henry III. A similar voluntary blunder is that of Surita, in his *Annales de la Corona de Aragon.* This writer represents, in the battles he describes, many persons who were not present; and this, merely to confer honour on some particular families.

Fabiani, quoting a French narrative of travels in Italy, took for the name of the author the words, found at the end of the title-page, *Enrichi de deux Listes;* that is, "Enriched with two lists:" on this he observes, "that Mr. Enriched with two lists has not failed to do that justice to Ciampini which he merited." The abridgers of Gesner's Bibliotheca ascribe the romance of Amadis to one *Acuerdo Olvido;* Remembrance, Oblivion; mistaking the French translator's Spanish motto on the title-page, for the name of the author.

D'Aquin, the French king's physician, in his Memoir on the Preparation of Bark, takes *Mantissa*, which is the title of the Appendix to the History of Plants by Johnstone, for the name of an author, and who, he says, is so extremely rare, that he only knows him by name.

Lord Bolingbroke imagined, that in those famous verses, beginning with *Excudent alii*, &c. Virgil attributed to the Romans the glory of having surpassed the Greeks in historical composition: according to his idea, those Roman historians whom Virgil preferred to the Grecians were Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus. But Virgil died before Livy had written his history, or Tacitus was born.

An honest friar, who compiled a church history, has placed in the class of ecclesiastical writers, Guarini, the Italian poet: on the faith of the title of his celebrated amorous pastoral, *Il Pastor Fido*, "The Faithful Shepherd," our good father imagined that the character of a curate, vicar, or bishop, was represented in this work.

A blunder has been recorded of the monks in the dark ages, which was likely enough to happen when their ignorance was so dense. A rector of a parish going to law with his parishioners about paving the church, quoted this authority from St. Peter—*Pavcam illi, non pavcam ego;* which he construed, *They are to pave the church, not I.* This was allowed to be good law by a judge, himself an ecclesiastic too!

One of the grossest literary blunders of modern times is that of the late Gilbert Wakefield, in his edition of Pope. He there takes the well known "Song by a Person of Quality," which is a piece of ridicule on the glit-

tering tuneful nonsense of certain poets, as a serious composition. In a most copious commentary, he proves that every line seems unconnected with its brothers, and that the whole reflects disgrace on its author! A circumstance which too evidently shows how necessary the knowledge of modern literary history is to a modern commentator, and that those who are profound in verbal Greek are not the best critics on English writers.

The Abbé Bizot, the author of the medallic history of Holland, fell into a droll mistake. There is a medal, struck when Philip II. set forth his *invincible Armada*, on which are represented the King of Spain, the Emperor, the Pope, Electors, Cardinals, &c. with their eyes covered with a bandage, and bearing for inscription this fine verse of Lucretius:—

O cæcas hominum mentes! O pectora cæca!

The abbé prepossessed with the prejudice, that a nation persecuted by the pope and his adherents could not represent them without some insult, did not examine with sufficient care the ends of the bandages which covered the eyes and waved about the heads of the personages represented on this medal: he rashly took them for *asses' ears*, and as such they are engraved!

Mabillon has preserved a curious literary blunder of some pious Spaniards, who applied to the Pope for consecrating a day in honour of *Saint Viar*. His holiness, in the voluminous catalogue of his saints, was ignorant of this one. The only proof brought forwards for his existence was this incription:—

S. VIAR.

An antiquary, however, hindered one more festival in the Catholic calendar, by convincing them that these letters were only the remains of an inscription erected for an ancient surveyor of the roads: and he read their saintship thus:

PRÆFECTUS VIARUM.

Maffei, in his comparison between Medals and Inscriptions, detects a literary blunder in Spon, who, meeting with this inscription,

Maxime VI. Consule.

takes the letters VI for numerals, which occasions a strange anachronism. They are only contractions of *Viro Illustri*—V I.

As absurd a blunder was this of Dr. Stukeley on the coins of Carausius; finding a battered one with a defaced inscription of

FORTVNA AVg.

he read it

ORIVNA AVg.

And sagaciously interpreting this to be the *wife* of Carausius, makes a new personage start up in history; he contrives even to give some *theoretical Memoirs* of the *August Oriuna!*

Father Sirmond was of opinion that St. Ursula and her eleven thousand Virgins were all created out of a blunder. In some ancient MS. they found *St. Ursula*

et Undecimilla V. M. meaning St. Ursula and *Undecimilla*, Virgin Martyrs; imagining that *Undecimilla* with the *V.* and *M.* which followed, was an abbreviation for *Undecem Millia Martyrum Virginum*, they made out of *Two Virgins* the whole *Eleven Thousand!*

Pope, in a note on Measure for Measure, informs us, that its story was taken from Cinthio's Novels, *Dec.* 8. *Nov.* 5. That is, *Decade* 8, *Novel* 5. The critical Warburton, in his edition of Shakspeare, puts the words in full length thus, *December* 8, *November* 5.

When the fragments of Petronius made a great noise in the literary world, Meibomius, an erudit of Lubeck, read in a letter from another learned scholar of Bologna, "We have here *an entire Petronius;* I saw it with mine own eyes, and with admiration." Meibomius in post-haste is on the road, arrives at Bologna, and immediately inquires for the librarian Capponi. He inquires if it were true that they had at Bologna *an entire Petronius?* Capponi assures him that it was a thing which had long been public. "Can I see this Petronius? Let me examine it!"—"Certainly," replies Capponi, and leads our erudit of Lubeck to the church where reposes *the body of St. Petronius.* Meibomius bites his lips, calls for his chaise, and takes his flight.

A French translator, when he came to a passage of Swift, in which it is said that the Duke of Marlborough *broke* an officer; not being acquainted with this Anglicism, he translated it *roué*, broke on a wheel!

Cibber's play of "*Love's last Shift*" was entitled "*La Dernière Chemise de l' Amour.*" A French writer of

Congreve's life has taken his *Mourning* for a *Morning* Bride, and translated it *L' Epouse du Matin*.

Sir John Pringle mentions his having cured a soldier by the use of two quarts of *Dog and Duck water* daily: a French translator specifies it as an excellent *broth* made of a duck and a dog! In a recent catalogue compiled by a French writer of *Works on Natural History*, he has inserted the well-known "Essay on *Irish Bulls*" by the Edgeworths. The proof, if it required any, that a Frenchman cannot understand the idiomatic style of Shakspeare appears in a French translator, who prided himself on giving a verbal translation of our great poet, not approving of Le Tourneur's paraphrastical version. He found in the celebrated speech of Northumberland in Henry IV.

> Even such a man, so faint, so spiritless,
> So dull, so dead in look, *so woe-begone*—

which he renders "*Ainsi douleur! va-t'en!*"

The Abbe Gregoire affords another striking proof of the errors to which foreigners are liable when they decide on the *language* and *customs* of another country. The Abbe, in the excess of his philanthropy, to show to what dishonourable offices human nature is degraded, acquaints us that at London he observed a sign-board, proclaiming the master as *tuer des punaises de sa majesté!* Bug-destroyer to his majesty! This is no doubt the honest Mr. Tiffin, in the Strand; and the idea which must have occurred to the good Abbe was, that his majesty's bugs were hunted by the said destroyer, and taken by hand—and thus human nature was degraded!

A French writer translates the Latin title of a treatise of Philo-Judæus *Omnis bonus liber est*, Every good man is a free man, by *Tout livre est bon*. It was well for him, observes Jortin, that he did not live within the reach of the Inquisition, which might have taken this as a reflection on the *Index Expurgatorius*.

An English translator turned "Dieu *défend* l'adultère" into "God *defends* adultery." Guthrie, in his translation of Du Halde, has "the twenty-sixth day of the *new* moon." The whole age of the moon is but twenty-eight days. The blunder arose from his mistaking the word *neuvieme* (nine) for *nouvelle* or *neuve* (new).

The facetious Tom Brown committed a strange blunder in his translation of Gelli's Circe. The word *Starne*, not aware of its signification, he boldly rendered *stares*, probably from the similitude of sound; the succeeding translator more correctly discovered *Starne* to be red-legged partridges!

In Charles II.'s reign a new collect was drawn, in which a new epithet was added to the king's title, that gave great offence, and occasioned great raillery. He was styled *our most religious king*. Whatever the signification of *religious* might be in the *Latin* word, as importing the sacredness of the king's person, yet in the *English language* it bore a signification that was no way applicable to the king. And he was asked by his familiar courtiers, what must the nation think when they heard him prayed for as their *most religious king?*— Literary blunders of this nature are frequently disco

vered in the versions of good classical scholars, who would make the *English* servilely bend to the Latin and Greek. Even Milton has been justly censured for his free use of Latinisms and Grecisms.

The blunders of modern antiquaries on sepulchral monuments are numerous. One mistakes *a lion* at a knight's feet for *a water curled dog;* another could not distinguish *censers* in the hands of angels from *fishing-nets; two angels* at a lady's feet were counted as her two cherub-like *babes;* and another has mistaken a *leopard* and a *hedgehog* for a *cat* and a *rat!* In some of these cases are the antiquaries or the sculptors most to be blamed?

A literary blunder of Thomas Warton is a specimen of the manner in which a man of genius may continue to blunder with infinite ingenuity. In an old romance he finds these lines, describing the duel of Saladin with Richard Cœur de Lion:—

> A *Faucon brode* in hande he bare,
> For he thought he wolde thare
> Have slayne Richard.

He imagines this *Faucon brode* means a *falcon bird*, or a hawk, and that Saladin is represented with this bird on his fist to express his contempt of his adversary. He supports his conjecture by noticing a Gothic picture, supposed to be the subject of this duel, and also some old tapestry of heroes on horseback with hawks on their fists; he plunges into feudal times when no gentleman appeared on horseback without his hawk. After all this curious erudition, the rough but skilful Ritson inhu-

manly triumphed by dissolving the magical fancies of the more elegant Warton, by explaining a *Faucon brode* to be nothing more than a *broad faulchion*, which, in a duel, was certainly more useful than a *bird*. The editor of the private reprint of Hentzner, on that writer's tradition respecting "the Kings of Denmark who reigned in England" buried in the Temple Church, metamorphosed the two Inns of Court, *Gray's Inn* and *Lincoln's Inn*, into the names of the Danish kings, *Gresin* and *Lyconin*.

Bayle supposes that Marcellus Palingenius, who wrote the poem entitled the *Zodiac*, the twelve books bearing the names of the signs, from this circumstance assumed the title of *Poeta Stellatus*. But it appears that this writer was an Italian and a native of *Stellada*, a town in the Ferrarese. It is probable that his birth-place originally produced the conceit of the title of his poem: it is a curious instance how a critical conjecture may be led astray by its own ingenuity, when ignorant of the real fact.

A LITERARY WIFE.

> Marriage is such a rabble rout,
> That those that are out, would fain get in;
> And those that are in, would fain get out.
>
> CHAUCER.

HAVING examined some *literary blunders*, we will now proceed to the subject of a *literary wife*, which may happen to prove one. A learned lady is to the taste of few. It is however matter of surprise, that

several literary men should have felt such a want of taste in respect to "their soul's far dearer part," as Hector calls his Andromache. The wives of many men of letters have been dissolute, ill-humoured, slatternly, and have run into all the frivolities of the age. The wife of the learned Budæus was of a different character.

How delightful is it when the mind of the female is so happily disposed, and so richly cultivated, as to participate in the literary avocations of her husband! It is then truly that the intercourse of the sexes becomes the most refined pleasure. What delight, for instance, must the great Budæus have tasted, even in those works which must have been for others a most dreadful labour! His wife left him nothing to desire. The frequent companion of his studies, she brought him the books he required to his desk; she collated passages, and transcribed quotations; the same genius, the same inclination, and the same ardour for literature, eminently appeared in those two fortunate persons. Far from withdrawing her husband from his studies, she was sedulous to animate him when he languished. Ever at his side, and ever assiduous; ever with some useful book in her hand, she acknowledged herself to be a most happy woman. Yet she did not neglect the education of eleven children. She and Budæus shared in the mutual cares they owed their progeny. Budæus was not insensible of his singular felicity. In one of his letters, he represents himself as married to two *ladies;* one of whom gave him boys and girls, the other was Philosophy, who produced books. He says, that in his twelve first years, Philosophy had been less

fruitful than Marriage; he had produced less books than children; he had laboured more corporally than intellectually; but he hoped to make more books than men. "The soul (says he) will be productive in its turn; it will rise on the ruins of the body; a prolific virtue is not given at the same time to the bodily organs and the pen."

The lady of Evelyn designed herself the frontispiece to his translation of Lucretius. She felt the same passion in her own breast which animated her husband's, who has written with such various ingenuity. Of Baron Haller it is recorded that he inspired his wife and family with a taste for his different pursuits. They were usually employed in assisting his literary occupations; they transcribed manuscripts, consulted authors, gathered plants, and designed and coloured under his eye. What a delightful family picture has the younger Pliny given posterity in his letters!—Of Calphurnia, his wife, he says, "Her affection to me has given her a turn to books; and my compositions, which she takes a pleasure in reading, and even getting by heart, are continually in her hands. How full of tender solicitude is she when I am entering upon any cause! How kindly does she rejoice with me when it is over! While I am pleading, she places persons to inform her from time to time how I am heard, what applauses I receive, and what success attends the cause. When at any time I recite my works, she conceals herself behind some curtain, and with secret rapture enjoys my praises. She sings my verses to her lyre, with no other master

but love, the best instructor, for her guide. Her passion will increase with our days, for it is not my youth nor my person, which time gradually impairs, but my reputation and my glory, of which she is enamoured."

On the subject of a literary wife, I must introduce to the acquaintance of the reader, Margaret, duchess of Newcastle. She is known at least by her name, as a voluminous writer; for she extended her literary productions to the number of twelve folio volumes.

Her labours have been ridiculed by some wits; but had her studies been regulated, she would have displayed no ordinary genius. The *Connoisseur* has quoted her poems, and her verses have been imitated by Milton.

The duke, her husband, was also an author: his book on horsemanship still preserves his name. He has likewise written comedies, and his contemporaries have not been penurious in their eulogiums. It is true he was a duke. Shadwell says of him, "That he was the greatest master of wit, the most exact observer of mankind, and the most accurate judge of humour that ever he knew." The life of the duke is written "by the hand of his incomparable duchess." It was published in his lifetime. This curious piece of biography is a folio of 197 pages, and is entitled "The Life of the Thrice Noble, High, and Puissant Prince, William Cavendish." His titles then follow:—"Written by the Thrice Noble, Illustrious, and Excellent Princess, Margaret Duchess of Newcastle, his wife. London, 1667." This Life is dedicated to Charles the Second;

and there is also prefixed a copious epistle to her husband the duke.

In this epistle the character of our Literary Wife is described with all its peculiarities.

"Certainly, my lord, you have had as many enemies and as many friends as ever any one particular person had; nor do I so much wonder at it, since I, a woman, cannot be exempt from the malice and aspersions of spiteful tongues, which they cast upon my poor writings, some denying me to be the true authoress of them; for your grace remembers well, that those books I put out first to the judgment of this censorious age were accounted not to be written by a woman, but that somebody else had writ and published them in my name; by which your lordship was moved to prefix an epistle before one of them in my vindication, wherein you assure the world, upon your honour, that what was written and printed in my name was my own; and I have also made known that your lordship was my only tutor, in declaring to me what you had found and observed by your own experience; for I being young when your lordship married me could not have much knowledge of the world; but it pleased God to command his servant Nature to endue me with a poetical and philosophical genius, even from my birth; for I did write some books in that kind before I was twelve years of age, which for want of good method and order I would never divulge. But though the world would not believe that those conceptions and fancies which I writ were my own, but transcended my capacity, yet they

found fault, that they were defective for want of learning, and on the other side, they said I had pluckt feathers out of the universities; which was a very preposterous judgment. Truly, my lord, I confess that for want of scholarship, I could not express myself so well as otherwise I might have done in those philosophical writings I published first; but after I was returned with your lordship into my native country, and led a retired country life, I applied myself to the reading of philosophical authors, on purpose to learn those names and words of art that are used in schools; which at first were so hard to me, that I could not understand them, but was fain to guess at the sense of them by the whole context, and so writ them down, as I found them in those authors: at which my readers did wonder, and thought it impossible that a woman could have so much learning and understanding in terms of art and scholastical expressions; so that I and my books are like the old apologue mentioned in Æsop, of a father and his son who rid on an ass." Here follows a long narrative of this fable, which she applies to herself in these words —"The old man seeing he could not please mankind in any manner, and having received so many blemishes and aspersions for the sake of his ass, was at last resolved to drown him when he came to the next bridge. But I am not so passionate to burn my writings for the various humours of mankind, and for their finding fault; since there is nothing in this world, be it the noblest and most commendable action whatsoever, that shall escape blameless. As for my being the true

and only authoress of them, your lordship knows best; and my attending servants are witness that I have had none but my own thoughts, fancies, and speculations, to assist me; and as soon as I set them down I send them to those that are to transcribe them, and fit them for the press; whereof, since there have been several, and amongst them such as only could write a good hand, but neither understood orthography, nor had any learning (I being then in banishment, with your lordship, and not able to maintain learned secretaries,) which hath been a great disadvantage to my poor works, and the cause that they have been printed so false and so full of errors; for besides that I want also skill in scholarship and true writing, I did many times not peruse the copies that were transcribed, lest they should disturb my following conceptions; by which neglect, as I said, many errors are slipt into my works, which, yet I hope, learned and impartial men will soon rectify, and look more upon the sense than carp at words. I have been a student even from childhood; and since I have been your lordship's wife I have lived for the most part a strict and retired life, as is best known to your lordship; and therefore my censurers cannot know much of me, since they have little or no acquaintance with me. 'Tis true I have been a traveller both before and after I was married to your lordship, and sometimes show myself at your lordship's command in public places or assemblies, but yet I converse with few. Indeed, my lord, I matter not the censures of this age, but am rather proud of them; for it shows that my actions are more than

ordinary, and according to the old proverb, It is better to be envied than pitied; for I know well that it is merely out of spite and malice, whereof this present age is so full that none can escape them, and they'll make no doubt to stain even your lordship's loyal, noble, and heroic actions, as well as they do mine; though yours have been of war and fighting, mine of contemplating and writing: yours were performed publicly in the field, mine privately in my closet; yours had many thousand eye-witnesses; mine none but my waiting-maids. But the great God, that hitherto bless'd both your grace and me, will, I question not, preserve both our fames to after-ages.

"Your grace's honest wife,
"and humble servant,
"M. NEWCASTLE."

The last portion of this life, which consists of the observations and good things which she had gathered from the conversations of her husband, forms an excellent Ana; and shows that when Lord Orford, in his "Catalogue of Noble Authors," says, that "this stately poetic couple was a picture of foolish nobility," he writes, as he does too often, with extreme levity. But we must now attend to the reverse of our medal.

Many chagrins may corrode the nuptial state of literary men. Females who, prompted by vanity, but not by taste, unite themselves to scholars, must ever complain of neglect. The inexhaustible occupations of a library will only present to such a most dreary solitude.

Such a lady declared of her learned husband, that she was more jealous of his books than his mistresses. It was probably while Glover was composing his "Leonidas," that his lady avenged herself for this *Homeric* inattention to her, and took her flight with a lover. It was peculiar to the learned Dacier to be united to a woman, his equal in erudition and his superior in taste. When she wrote in the album of a German traveller a verse from Sophocles as an apology for her unwillingness to place herself among his learned friends, that "Silence is the female's ornament," it was a trait of her modesty. The learned Pasquier was coupled to a female of a different character, since he tells us in one of his Epigrams that to manage the vociferations of his lady, he was compelled himself to become a vociferator.—"Unfortunate wretch that I am, I who am a lover of universal peace! But to have peace I am obliged ever to be at war."

Sir Thomas More was united to a woman of the harshest temper and the most sordid manners. To soften the moroseness of her disposition, "he persuaded her to play on the lute, viol, and other instruments, every day." Whether it was that she had no ear for music, she herself never became harmonious as the instrument she touched. All these ladies may be considered as rather too alert in thought, and too spirited in action; but a tame cuckoo bird who is always repeating the same tone must be very fatiguing. The lady of Samuel Clarke, the great compiler of books in 1680, whose name was anagrammatised to "*suck all cream*,"

alluding to his indefatigable labours in sucking all the cream of every other author, without having any cream himself, is described by her husband as entertaining the most sublime conceptions of his illustrious compilations. This appears by her behaviour. He says, "that she never rose from table without making him a curtesy, nor drank to him without bowing, and that his word was a law to her."

I was much surprised in looking over a correspondence of the times, that in 1590 the Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry writing to the Earl of Shrewsbury on the subject of his living separate from his countess, uses as one of his arguments for their union the following curious one, which surely shows the gross and cynical feeling which the fair sex excited even among the higher classes of society. The language of this good bishop is neither that of truth, we hope, nor certainly that of religion.

"But some will saye in your Lordship's behalfe that the Countesse is a sharpe and bitter shrewe, and therefore licke enough to shorten your lief, if shee should kepe yow company. Indeede, my good Lord, I have heard some say so; but if shrewdnesse or sharpnesse may be a juste cause of separation between a man and wiefe, I thinck fewe men in Englande would keepe their wives longe; for it is a common jeste, yet trewe in some sense, that there is but one shrewe in all the worlde, and everee man hath her: and so everee man must be ridd of his wiefe that wolde be ridd of a shrewe." It is wonderful this good bishop did not use another argu-

ment as cogent, and which would in those times be allowed as something; the name of his lordship, *Shrewsbury*, would have afforded a consolatory *pun!*

The entertaining Marville says that the generality of ladies married to literary men are so vain of the abilities and merit of their husbands, that they are frequently insufferable.

The wife of Barclay, author of "The Argenis," considered herself as the wife of a demigod. This appeared glaringly after his death: for Cardinal Barberini having erected a monument to the memory of his tutor, next to the tomb of Barclay, Mrs. Barclay was so irritated at this that she demolished his monument, brought home his bust, and declared that the ashes of so great a genius as her husband should never be placed beside a pedagogue.

Salmasius's wife was a termagant; Christina said she admired his patience more than his erudition. Mrs. Salmasius indeed considered herself as the queen of science, because her husband was acknowledged as sovereign among the critics. She boasted that she had for her husband the most learned of all the nobles, and the most noble of all the learned. Our good lady always joined the learned conferences which he held in his study. She spoke loud, and decided with a tone of majesty. Salmasius was mild in conversation, but the reverse in his writings, for our proud Xantippe considered him as acting beneath himself if he did not magisterially call every one names!

The wife of Rohault, when her husband gave lectures

on the philosophy of Descartes, used to seat herself on these days at the door, and refused admittance to every one shabbily dressed, or who did not discover a genteel air. So convinced was she that, to be worthy of hearing the lectures of her husband, it was proper to appear fashionable. In vain our good lecturer exhausted himself in telling her that fortune does not always give fine clothes to philosophers.

The ladies of Albert Durer and Berghem were both shrews. The wife of Durer compelled that great genius to the hourly drudgery of his profession, merely to gratify her own sordid passion: in despair, Albert ran away from his Tisiphone; she wheedled him back, and not long afterwards this great artist fell a victim to her furious disposition. Berghem's wife would never allow that excellent artist to quit his occupations: and she contrived an odd expedient to detect his indolence. The artist worked in a room above her; ever and anon she roused him by thumping a long stick against the ceiling, while the obedient Berghem answered by stamping his foot, to satisfy Mrs. Berghem that he was not napping.

Ælian had an aversion to the marriage state. Sigonius, a learned and well known scholar, would never marry, and alleged no inelegant reason; that "Minerva and Venus could not live together."

Matrimony has been considered by some writers as a condition not so well suited to the circumstances of philosophers and men of learning. There is a little tract which professes to investigate the subject. It has for title, *De Matrimonio Literati, an cœlibem esse, an verò*

nubere conveniat, i. e. of the Marriage of a Man of Letters, with an inquiry whether it is most proper for him to continue a bachelor, or to marry?

"The author alleges the great merit of some women; particularly that of Conzaga the consort of Montefeltro, duke of Urbino; a lady of such distinguished accomplishments, that Peter Bembus said, none but a stupid man would not prefer one of her conversations to all the formal meetings and disputations of the philosophers.

"The ladies perhaps will be surprised to find that it is a question among the learned, *Whether they ought to marry?* and will think it an unaccountable property of learning that it should lay the professors of it under an obligation to disregard the sex. But it is very questionable whether, in return for this want of complaisance in them, the generality of ladies would not prefer the beau, and the man of fashion. However, let there be Gonzagas, they will find converts enough to their charms."

The sentiments of Sir Thomas Browne on the consequences of marriage are very curious, in the second part of his Religio Medici, sect. 9. When he wrote that work, he said, "I was never yet once, and commend their resolutions, who never marry twice." He calls woman "the rib and crooked piece of man." He adds, "I could be content that we might procreate like trees, without conjunction, or that there were any way to procreate the world without this trivial and vulgar way." He means the union of sexes, which he declares "is the foolishest act a wise man commits in all his life, nor is

there any thing that will more deject his cooled imagination, when he shall consider what an odd and unworthy piece of folly he hath committed." He afterwards declares he is not averse to that sweet sex, but naturally amorous of all that is beautiful; "I could look a whole day with delight upon a handsome picture, though it be but of a horse." He afterwards disserts very profoundly on the music there is in beauty, "and the silent note which Cupid strikes is far sweeter than the sound of an instrument." Such were his sentiments when youthful, and residing at Leyden; Dutch philosophy had at first chilled his passion; it is probable that passion afterwards inflamed his philosophy—for he married, and had sons and daughters!

Dr. Cocchi, a modern Italian writer, but apparently a cynic as old as Diogenes, has taken the pains of composing a treatise on the present subject enough to terrify the boldest *Bachelor* of Arts! He has conjured up every chimera against the marriage of a literary man. He seems, however, to have drawn his disgusting portrait from his own country; and the chaste beauty of Britain only looks the more lovely beside this Florentine wife.

I shall not retain the cynicism which has coloured such revolting features. When at length the doctor finds a woman as all women ought to be, he opens a new spring of misfortunes which must attend her husband. He dreads one of the probable consequences of matrimony—progeny, in which we must maintain the

children we beget! He thinks the father gains nothing in his old age from the tender offices administered by his own children: he asserts these are much better performed by menials and strangers! The more children he has, the less he can afford to have servants! The maintenance of his children will greatly diminish his property! Another alarming object in marriage is that, by affinity, you become connected with the relations of the wife. The envious and ill-bred insinuations of the mother, the family quarrels, their poverty or their pride, all disturb the unhappy sage who falls into the trap of connubial felicity! But if a sage has resolved to marry, he impresses on him the prudential principle of increasing his fortune by it, and to remember his "additional expenses!" Dr. Cocchi seems to have thought that a human being is only to live for himself; he had neither a heart to feel, a head to conceive, nor a pen that could have written one harmonious period, or one beautiful image! Bayle, in his article *Raphelengius*, note B, gives a singular specimen of logical subtlety, in "a reflection on the consequence of marriage." This learned man was imagined to have died of grief for having lost his wife, and passed three years in protracted despair. What therefore must we think of an unhappy marriage, since a happy one is exposed to such evils? He then shows that an unhappy marriage is attended by beneficial consequences to the survivor. In this dilemma, in the one case, the husband lives afraid his wife will die, in the other that she will not! If you love her, you will always be afraid of losing her; if you

do not love her, you will always be afraid of not losing her. Our satirical *Celibataire* is gored by the horns of the dilemma he has conjured up.

James Petiver, a famous botanist, then a bachelor, the friend of Sir Hans Sloane, in an album signs his name with this designation :—

> "From the Goat tavern in the Strand, London, Nov. 27. In the 34th year of my *freedom*, A.D. 1697."

DEDICATIONS.

Some authors excelled in this species of literary artifice. The Italian Doni dedicated each of his letters in a book called *La Libraria*, to persons whose name began with the first letter of the epistle, and dedicated the whole collection in another epistle; so that the book, which only consisted of forty-five pages, was dedicated to above twenty persons. This is carrying literary mendicity pretty high. Politi, the editor of the *Martyrologium Romanum*, published at Rome in 1751, has improved on the idea of Doni; for to the 365 days of the year of this Martyrology he has prefixed to each an epistle dedicatory. It is fortunate to have a large circle of acquaintance, though they should not be worthy of being saints. Galland, the translator of the Arabian Nights, prefixed a dedication to each tale which he gave; had he finished the "one thousand and one," he would have surpassed even the Martyrologist.

Mademoiselle Scudery tells a remarkable expedient of

an ingenious trader in this line—One Rangouze made a collection of letters which he printed without numbering them. By this means the book-binder put that letter which the author ordered him first; so that all the persons to whom he presented this book, seeing their names at the head, considered they had received a particular compliment. An Italian physician, having written on Hippocrates's Aphorisms, dedicated each book of his Commentaries to one of his friends, and the index to another!

More than one of our own authors have dedications in the same spirit. It was an expedient to procure dedicatory fees: for publishing books by subscription was an art then undiscovered. One prefixed a different dedication to a certain number of printed copies, and addressed them to every great man he knew, who he thought relished a morsel of flattery, and would pay handsomely for a coarse luxury. Sir Balthazar Gerbier, in his "Counsel to Builders," has made up half the work with forty-two Dedications, which he excuses by the example of Antonio Perez; but in these dedications Perez scatters a heap of curious things, for he was a very universal genius. Perez, once secretary of state to Philip II. of Spain, dedicates his "Obras," first to "Nuestro sanctissimo Padre," and "Al Sacro Collegio," then follows one to "Henry IV." and then one still more embracing, "A Todos."—Fuller, in his "Church History," has with admirable contrivance introduced twelve title-pages, besides the general one, and as many particular dedications, and no less than fifty or

sixty of those by inscriptions which are addressed to his benefactors; a circumstance which Heylin in his severity did not overlook; for "making his work bigger by forty sheets at the least; and he was so ambitious of the number of his patrons, that having but four leaves at the end of his History, he discovers a particular benefactress to inscribe them to!" This unlucky lady, the patroness of four leaves, Heylin compares to Roscius Regulus, who accepted the consular dignity for that part of the day on which Cecina by a decree of the senate was degraded from it, which occasioned Regulus to be ridiculed by the people all his life after, as the consul of half a day.

The price for the dedication of a play was at length fixed, from five to ten guineas from the Revolution to the time of George I., when it rose to twenty; but sometimes a bargain was to be struck when the author and the play were alike indifferent. Sometimes the party haggled about the price, or the statue while stepping into his niche would turn round on the author to assist his invention. A patron of Peter Motteux, dissatisfied with Peter's colder temperament, actually composed the superlative dedication to himself, and completed the misery of the apparent author by subscribing it with his name. This circumstance was so notorious at the time, that it occasioned a satirical dialogue between Motteux and his patron Heveningham. The patron, in his zeal to omit no possible distinction that might attach to him, had given one circumstance which no one but himself could have known.

PATRON.

I must confess I was to blame,
That one particular to name;
The rest could never have been known,
I made the style so like thy own.

POET.

I beg your pardon, Sir, for that!

PATRON.

Why d——e what would you be at?
I *writ below myself*, you sot!
Avoiding figures, tropes, what not;
For fear I should my fancy raise
Above the level of thy plays!

Warton notices the common practice, about the reign of Elizabeth, of an author's dedicating a work at once to a number of the nobility. Chapman's Translation of Homer has sixteen sonnets addressed to lords and ladies. Henry Lock, in a collection of two hundred religious sonnets, mingles with such heavenly works the terrestrial composition of a number of sonnets to his noble patrons; and not to multiply more instances, our great poet Spenser, in compliance with this disgraceful custom, or rather in obedience to the established tyranny of patronage, has prefixed to the Fairy Queen fifteen of these adulatory pieces, which in every respect are the meanest of his compositions. At this period all men, as well as writers, looked up to the peers, as on beings on whose smiles or frowns all sublunary good and evil depended. At a much later period, Elkanah Settle sent copies round to the chief party, for he wrote

for both parties, accompanied by addresses to extort pecuniary presents in return. He had latterly one standard *Elegy*, and one *Epithalamium*, printed off with blanks, which by ingeniously filling up with the printed names of any great person who died or was married, no one who was going out of life or was entering into it could pass scotfree.

One of the most singular anecdotes respecting DEDICATIONS in English bibliography is that of the Polyglot bible of Dr. Castell. Cromwell, much to his honour, patronised that great labour, and allowed the paper to be imported free of all duties, both of excise and custom. It was published under the protectorate, but many copies had not been disposed of ere Charles II. ascended the throne. Dr. Castell had dedicated the work gratefully to Oliver, by mentioning him with peculiar respect in the preface, but he wavered with Richard Cromwell. At the Restoration, he cancelled the two last leaves, and supplied their places with three others, which softened down the republican strains, and blotted Oliver's name out of the book of life! The differences in what are now called the *republican* and the *loyal* copies have amused the curious collectors; and the former being very scarce are most sought after. I have seen the republican. In the *loyal* copies the patrons of the work are mentioned, but their *titles* are essentially changed; *Serenissimus*, *Illustrissimus*, and *Honoratissimus*, were epithets that dared not show themselves under the *levelling* influence of the great fanatic republican.

It is a curious literary folly, not of an individual but

of the Spanish nation, who, when the laws of Castile were reduced into a code under the reign of Alfonso X. surnamed the Wise, divided the work into *seven volumes;* that they might be dedicated to the *seven letters* which formed the name of his majesty!

Never was a gigantic baby of adulation so crammed with the soft pap of *Dedications* as Cardinal Richelieu. French flattery even exceeded itself.—Among the vast number of very extraordinary dedications to this man, in which the Divinity itself is disrobed of its attributes to bestow them on this miserable creature of vanity, I suspect that even the following one is not the most blasphemous he received. "Who has seen your face without being seized by those softened terrors which made the prophets shudder when God showed the beams of his glory! But as he whom they dared not to approach in the burning bush, and in the noise of thunders, appeared to them sometimes in the freshness of the zephyrs, so the softness of your august countenance dissipates at the same time, and changes into dew, the small vapours which cover its majesty." One of these herd of dedicators, after the death of Richelieu, suppressed in a second edition his hyperbolical panegyric, and as a punishment to himself, dedicated the work to Jesus Christ!

The same taste characterises our own dedications in the reigns of Charles II. and James II. The great Dryden has carried it to an excessive height; and nothing is more usual than to compare the *patron* with the *Divinity*—and at times a fair inference may

be drawn that the former was more in the author's mind than God himself! A Welsh bishop made an *apology* to James I. for *preferring* the Deity——to his Majesty! Dryden's extravagant dedications were the vices of the time more than of the man; they were loaded with flattery, and no disgrace was annexed to such an exercise of men's talents; the contest being who should go farthest in the most graceful way, and with the best turns of expression.

An ingenious dedication was contrived by Sir Simon Degge, who dedicated "the Parson's Counsellor" to Woods, Bishop of Lichfield, with this intention. Degge highly complimented the Bishop on having most nobly restored the church, which had been demolished in the civil wars, and was rebuilt but left unfinished by Bishop Hacket. At the time he wrote the dedication, Woods had not turned a single stone, and it is said, that much against his will he did something, from having been so publicly reminded of it by this ironical dedication.

PHILOSOPHICAL DESCRIPTIVE POEMS.

The "Botanic Garden" once appeared to open a new route through the trodden groves of Parnassus. The poet, to a prodigality of Imagination, united all the minute accuracy of Science. It is a highly-repolished labour, and was in the mind and in the hand of its author for twenty years before its first publication. The excessive polish of the verse has appeared too high to be endured throughout a long composition; it

is certain that, in poems of length, a versification, which is not too florid for lyrical composition, will weary by its brilliancy. Darwin, inasmuch as a rich philosophical fancy constitutes a poet, possesses the entire art of poetry; no one has carried the curious mechanism of verse and the artificial magic of poetical diction to a higher perfection. His volcanic head flamed with imagination, but his torpid heart slept unawakened by passion. His standard of poetry is by much too limited; he supposes that the essence of poetry is something of which a painter can make a picture. A picturesque verse was with him a verse completely poetical. But the language of the passions has no connexion with this principle; in truth, what he delineates as poetry itself, is but one of its provinces. Deceived by his illusive standard, he has composed a poem which is perpetually fancy, and never passion. Hence his processional splendour fatigues, and his descriptive ingenuity comes at length to be deficient in novelty, and all the miracles of art cannot supply us with one touch of nature.

Descriptive poetry should be relieved by a skilful intermixture of passages addressed to the heart as well as to the imagination: uniform description satiates; and has been considered as one of the inferior branches of poetry. Of this both Thomson and Goldsmith were sensible. In their beautiful descriptive poems they knew the art of animating the pictures of FANCY with the glow of SENTIMENT.

Whatever may be thought of the originality of

Darwin's poem, it has been preceded by others of a congenial disposition. Brookes's poem on "Universal Beauty," published about 1735, presents us with the very model of Darwin's versification; and the Latin poem of De la Croix, in 1727, intitled "*Connubia Florum*," with his subject. There also exists a race of poems which have hitherto been confined to *one object*, which the poet selected from the works of nature, to embellish with all the splendour of poetic imagination. I have collected some titles.

Perhaps it is Homer, in his battle of the *Frogs and Mice*, and Virgil in the poem on a *Gnat*, attributed to him, who have given birth to these lusory poems. The Jesuits, particularly when they composed in Latin verse, were partial to such subjects. There is a little poem on *Gold*, by P. Le Fevre, distinguished for its elegance: and Brumoy has given the *Art of making Glass;* in which he has described its various productions with equal felicity and knowledge. P. Vanière has written on *Pigeons*, Du Cerceau on *Butterflies*. The success which attended these productions produced numerous imitations, of which several were favourably received. Vanière composed three on the *Grape*, the *Vintage*, and the *Kitchen Garden*. Another poet selected *Oranges* for his theme; others have chosen for their subjects, *Paper*, *Birds*, and fresh-water *Fish*. Tarillon has inflamed his imagination with *gunpowder;* a milder genius, delighted with the oaten pipe, sang of *Sheep;* one who was more pleased with another kind of pipe, has written on *Tobacco;* and a droll genius wrote

a poem on *Asses*. Two writers have formed didactic poems on the *Art of Enigmas*, and on *Ships*.

Others have written on moral subjects. Brumoy has painted the *Passions*, with a variety of imagery and vivacity of description; P. Meyer has disserted on *Anger;* Tarillon, like our Stillingfleet, on the *Art of Conversation;* and a lively writer has discussed the subjects of *Humour and Wit*.

Giannetazzi, an Italian Jesuit, celebrated for his Latin poetry, has composed two volumes of poems on *Fishing* and *Navigation*. Fracastor has written delicately on an indelicate subject, his *Syphilis*. Le Brun wrote a delectable poem on *Sweetmeats;* another writer on *Mineral Waters*, and a third on *Printing*. Vida pleases with his *Silk-worms* and his *Chess;* Buchanan is ingenious with his *Sphere*. Malapert has aspired to catch the *Winds;* the philosophic Huet amused himself with *Salt*, and again with *Tea*. The *Gardens* of Rapin is a finer poem than critics generally can write; Quillet's *Callipedia*, or Art of getting handsome Children, has been translated by Rowe; and Du Fresnoy at length gratifies the connoisseur with his poem on *Painting*, by the embellishments which his verses have received from the poetic diction of Mason, and the commentary of Reynolds.

This list might be augmented with a few of our own poets, and there still remain some virgin themes which only require to be touched by the hand of a true poet. In the "Memoirs of Trevoux" they observe, in their review of the poem on *Gold*, "That poems of this

kind have the advantage of instructing us very agreeably. All that has been most remarkably said on the subject is united, compressed in a luminous order, and dressed in all the agreeable graces of poetry. Such writers have no little difficulties to encounter: the style and expression cost dear; and still more to give to an arid topic an agreeable form, and to elevate the subject without falling into another extreme.—In the other kinds of poetry the matter assists and prompts genius; here we must possess an abundance to display it."

PAMPHLETS.

Myles Davies's "Icon Libellorum, or a Crisical History of Pamphlets," affords some curious information; and as this is a *pamphlet*-reading age, I thall give a sketch of its contents.

The author observes: "From Pamphlets may be learned the genius of the age, the debates of the learned, the follies of the ignorant, the *bévues* of government, and the mistakes of the courtiers. Pamphlets furnish beaus with their airs, coquettes with their charms Pamphlets are as modish ornaments to gentlewomen's toilets as to gentlemen's pockets; they carry reputation of wit and learning to all that make them their companions; the poor find their account in stall-keeping and in hawking them; the rich find in them their shortest way to the secrets of church and state. There is scarce any class of people but may think themselves interested enough to be concerned with what is published

in pamphlets, either as to their private instruction, curiosity, and reputation, or to the public advantage and credit; with all which both ancient and modern pamphlets are too often over familiar and free.—In short, with pamphlets the booksellers and stationers adorn the gaiety of shop-gazing. Hence accrues to grocers, apothecaries, and chandlers, good furniture, and supplies to necessary retreats and natural occasions. In pamphlets lawyers will meet with their chicanery, physicians with their cant, divines with their Shibboleth. Pamphlets become more and more daily amusements to the curious, idle, and inquisitive; pastime to gallants and coquettes; chat to the talkative; catch-words to informers; fuel to the envious; poison to the unfortunate; balsam to the wounded; employ to the lazy; and fabulous materials to romancers and novelists."

This author sketches the origin and rise of pamphlets. He deduces them from the short writings published by the Jewish Rabbins; various little pieces at the time of the first propagation of Christianity; and notices a certain pamphlet which was pretended to have been the composition of Jesus Christ, thrown from heaven, and picked up by the archangel Michael at the entrance of Jerusalem. It was copied by the priest Leora, and sent about from priest to priest, till Pope Zachary ventured to pronounce it a *forgery*. He notices several such extraordinary publications, many of which produced as extraordinary effects.

He proceeds in noticing the first Arian and Popish

pamphlets, or rather *libels*, i. e. little books, as he distinguishes them. He relates a curious anecdote respecting the forgeries of the monks. Archbishop Usher detected in a manuscript of St. Patrick's life, pretended to have been found at Louvain, as an original of a very remote date, several passages taken, with little alteration, from his own writings.

The following notice of our immortal Pope I cannot pass over: "Another class of pamphlets writ by Roman Catholics is that of *Poems*, written chiefly by a Pope himself, a gentleman of that name. He passed always amongst most of his acquaintance for what is commonly called a Whig; for it seems the Roman politics are divided as well as Popish missionaries. However, one *Esdras*, an apothecary, as he qualifies himself, has published a piping-hot pamphlet against Mr. Pope's '*Rape of the Lock*,' which he entitles '*A Key to the Lock*,' wherewith he pretends to unlock nothing less than a *plot* carried on by Mr. Pope in that poem against the last and this present ministry and government."

He observes on *Sermons*,—"'Tis not much to be questioned, but of all modern pamphlets what or wheresoever, the *English stitched Sermons* be the most edifying, useful, and instructive, yet they could not escape the critical Mr. Bayle's sarcasm. He says, 'Republique des Lettres,' March 1710, in his article *London*, 'We see here sermons swarm daily from the press. Our eyes only behold manna: are you desirous of knowing the reason? It is, that the ministers being allowed to *read*

their sermons in the pulpit, *buy all they meet with*, and take no other trouble than to read them, and thus pass for very able scholars at a very cheap rate!'"

He now begins more directly the history of pamphlets, which he branches out from four different etymologies. He says, "However foreign the word *Pamphlet* may appear, it is a genuine English word, rarely known or adopted in any other language: its pedigree cannot well be traced higher than the latter end of Queen Elizabeth's reign. In its first state wretched must have been its appearance, since the great linguist John Minshew, in his '*Guide into Tongues*,' printed in 1617, gives it the most miserable character of which any libel can be capable. Mr. Minshew says (and his words were quoted by Lord Chief Justice Holt), 'A PAMPHLET, that is *Opusculum Stolidorum*, the diminutive performance of fools; from πᾶν, *all*, and πλήθω, I *fill*, to wit, *all* places. According to the vulgar saying, all things are full of fools, or foolish things; for such multitudes of pamphlets, unworthy of the very name of libels, being more vile than common shores and the filth of beggars, and being flying papers daubed over and besmeared with the foams of drunkards, are tossed far and near into the mouths and hands of scoundrels; neither will the sham oracles of Apollo be esteemed so mercenary as a Pamphlet.'"

Those who will have the word to be derived from PAM, the famous knave of LOO, do not differ much from Minshew; for the derivation of the word *Pam* is

in all probability from πᾶν, *all;* or the *whole* or the *chief* of the game.

Under this *first* etymological notion of Pamphlets may be comprehended the *vulgar stories* of the Nine Worthies of the World, of the Seven Champions of Christendom, Tom Thumb, Valentine and Orson, &c. as also most of apocryphal lucubrations. The greatest collection of this first sort of Pamphlets are the Rabbinic traditions in the Talmud, consisting of fourteen volumes in folio, and the Popish legends of the Lives of the Saints, which, though not finished, form fifty folio volumes, all which tracts were originally in pamphlet forms.

The *second* idea of the *radix* of the word *Pamphlet* is, that it takes its derivations from πᾶν, *all*, and φιλέω, *I love*, signifying a thing beloved by all; for a pamphlet being of a small portable bulk, and of no great price, is adapted to every one's understanding and reading. In this class may be placed all stitched books on serious subjects, the best of which fugitive pieces have been generally preserved, and even reprinted in collections of some tracts, miscellanies, sermons, poems, &c.; and, on the contrary, bulky volumes have been reduced, for the convenience of the public, into the familiar shapes of stitched pamphlets. Both these methods have been thus censured by the majority of the lower house of convocation 1711. These abuses are thus represented: "They have re-published, and collected into volumes, pieces written long ago on the side of infidelity. They

have reprinted together in the most contracted manner, many loose and licentious pieces, in order to their being purchased more cheaply, and dispersed more easily."

The *third* original interpretation of the word Pamphlet may be that of the learned Dr. Skinner, in his *Etymologicon Linguæ Anglicanæ*, that it is derived from the Belgic word *Pampier*, signifying a little paper, or libel. To this third set of Pamphlets may be reduced all sorts of printed single sheets, or half sheets, or any other quantity of single paper prints, such as Declarations, Remonstrances, Proclamations, Edicts, Orders, Injunctions, Memorials, Addresses, Newspapers, &c.

The *fourth* radical signification of the word Pamphlet is that homogeneal acceptation of it, viz. as it imports any little book, or small volume whatever, whether stitched or bound, whether good or bad, whether serious or ludicrous. The only proper Latin term for a Pamphlet is *Libellus*, or little book. This word indeed signifies in English an *abusive* paper or little book, and is generally taken in the worst sense.

After all this display of curious literature, the reader may smile at the guesses of Etymologists; particularly when he is reminded that the derivation of *Pamphlet* is drawn from quite another meaning to any of the present, by Johnson, which I shall give for his immediate gratification.

Pamphlet [*par un filet*, Fr. Whence this word is written anciently, and by Caxton, *pawnflet*] a small book; properly a book sold unbound, and only stitched.

The French have borrowed the word *Pamphlet* from

us, and have the goodness of not disfiguring its orthography. *Roast Beef* is also in the same predicament. I conclude that *Pamphlets* and *Roast Beef* have therefore their origin in our country.

Pinkerton favoured me with the following curious notice concerning pamphlets:—

Of the etymon of *pamphlet* I know nothing; but that the word is far more ancient than is commonly believed, take the following proof from the celebrated *Philobiblion*, ascribed to Richard de Buri, bishop of Durham, but written by Robert Holkot, at his desire, as Fabricius says, about the year 1344, (Fabr. Bibl. Medii Ævi, Vol I.); it is in the eighth chapter.

"Sed revera libros non libras maluimus; codicesque plus dileximus quam florenos: ac PANFLETOS exiguos phaleratis prætulimus palescedis."

"But, indeed, we prefer books to pounds; and we love manuscripts better than florins; and we prefer small *pamphlets* to war-horses."

This word is as old as Lydgate's time: among his works, quoted by Warton, is a poem "translated from a *pamflete* in Frensche."

LITTLE BOOKS.

MYLES DAVIES has given an opinion of the advantages of Little Books, with some humour.

"The smallness of the size of a book was always its own commendation; as, on the contrary, the largeness of a book is its own disadvantage, as well as terror of

learning. In short, a big book is a scare-crow to the head and pocket of the author, student, buyer, and seller, as well as a harbour of ignorance; hence the inaccessible masteries of the inexpugnable ignorance and superstition of the ancient heathens, degenerate Jews, and of the popish scholasters, and canonists entrenched under the frightful bulk of huge, vast, and innumerable volumes; such as the great folio that the Jewish rabbins fancied in a dream was given by the angel Raziel to his pupil Adam, containing all the celestial sciences. And the volumes writ by Zoroaster, entitled The Similitude, which is said to have taken up no more space than 1,260 hides of cattle: as also the 25,000, or, as some say, 36,000 volumes, besides 525 lesser MSS. of his. The grossness and multitude of Aristotle and Varro's books were both a prejudice to the authors, and an hinderance to learning, and an occasion of the greatest part of them being lost. The largeness of Plutarch's treatises is a great cause of his being neglected, while Longinus and Epictetus, in their pamphlet Remains, are every one's companions. Origen's 6,000 volumes (as Epiphanius will have it) were not only the occasion of his venting more numerous errors, but also for the most part of their perdition. —Were it not for Euclid's Elements, Hippocrates's Aphorisms, Justinian's Institutes, and Littleton's Tenures in small pamphlet volumes, young mathematicians, freshwater physicians, civilian novices, and *les apprentices en la ley d'Angleterre*, would be at a loss and stand, and total disencouragement. One of the

greatest advantages the *Dispensary* has over *King Arthur* is its pamphlet size. So Boileau's Lutrin, and his other pamphlet poems, in respect of Perrault's and Chapelain's St. Paulin and la Pucelle. *These* seem to pay a deference to the reader's quick and great understanding; *those* to mistrust his capacity, and to confine his time as well as his intellect."

Notwithstanding so much may be alleged in favour of books of a small size, yet the scholars of a former age regarded them with contempt. Scaliger, says Baillet, cavils with Drusius for the smallness of his books; and one of the great printers of the time (Moret, the successor of Plantin) complaining to the learned Puteanus, who was considered as the rival of Lipsius, that his books were too small for sale, and that purchasers turned away, frightened at their diminutive size; Puteanus referred him to Plutarch, whose works consist of small treatises; but the printer took fire at the comparison, and turned him out of his shop, for his vanity at pretending that he wrote in any manner like Plutarch! a specimen this of the politeness and reverence of the early printers for their learned authors; Jurieu reproaches Colomies that he is *a great author of little books!*

At least, if a man is the author only of little books, he will escape the sarcastic observation of Cicero on a voluminous writer—that "his body might be burned with his writings," of which we have had several, eminent for the worthlessness and magnitude of their labours.

It was the literary humour of a certain Mæcenas, who cheered the lustre of his patronage with the steams of a good dinner, to place his guests according to the size and thickness of the books they had printed. At the head of the table sat those who had published in *folio, foliissimo;* next the authors in *quarto;* then those in *octavo.* At that table Blackmore would have had the precedence of Gray. Addison, who found this anecdote in one of the Anas, has seized this idea, and applied it with his felicity of humour in No. 529 of the Spectator.

Montaigne's works have been called by a Cardinal, "The Breviary of Idlers." It is therefore the book for many men. Francis Osborne has a ludicrous image in favour of such opuscula. "Huge volumes, like the ox roasted whole at Bartholomew fair, may proclaim plenty of labour, but afford less of what is *delicate, savoury,* and *well-concocted,* than SMALLER PIECES."

In the list of titles of minor works, which Aulus Gellius has preserved, the lightness and beauty of such compositions are charmingly expressed. Among these we find—a Basket of Flowers; an Embroidered Mantle; and a Variegated Meadow.

A CATHOLIC'S REFUTATION.

IN a religious book published by a fellow of the Society of Jesus, entitled, "The Faith of a Catholic," the author examines what concerns the incredulous Jews and other infidels. He would show that Jesus

Christ, author of the religion which bears his name, did not impose on or deceive the Apostles whom he taught; that the Apostles who preached it did not deceive those who were converted; and that those who were converted did not deceive us. In proving these three not difficult propositions, he says, he confounds "the *Atheist*, who does not believe in God; the *Pagan*, who adores several; the *Deist*, who believes in one God, but who rejects a particular Providence; the *Freethinker*, who presumes to serve God according to his fancy, without being attached to any religion; the *Philosopher*, who takes reason and not revelation for the rule of his belief; the *Gentile*, who, never having regarded the Jewish people as a chosen nation, does not believe God promised them a Messiah; and finally, the *Jew*, who refuses to adore the Messiah in the person of Christ."

I have given this sketch, as it serves for a singular Catalogue of *Heretics*.

It is rather singular that so late as in the year 1765, a work should have appeared in Paris, which bears the title I translate, "The Christian Religion *proved* by a *single fact;* or a dissertation in which is shown that those *Catholics* of whom Huneric, King of the Vandals, cut the tongues, *spoke miraculously* all the remainder of their days; from whence is deduced the *consequences of this miracle* against the Arians, the Socinians, and the Deists, and particularly against the author of Emilius, by solving their difficulties." It bears this Epigraph; *Ecce Ego admirationem faciam populo huic, miraculo grandi et stupendo.*" There needs no further account of this book than the title.

Authors of moderate capacity have unceasingly harassed the public; and have at length been remembered only by the number of wretched volumes their unhappy industry has produced. Such an author was the Abbé de Marolles, otherwise a most estimable and ingenious man, and the patriarch of print-collectors.

This Abbé was a most egregious scribbler; and so tormented with violent fits of printing, that he even printed lists and catalogues of his friends. I have even seen at the end of one of his works a list of names of those persons who had given him books. He printed his works at his own expense, as the booksellers had unanimously decreed this. Menage used to say of his works, "The reason why I esteem the productions of the Abbé is, for the singular neatness of their bindings; he embellishes them so beautifully, that the eye finds pleasure in them." On a book of his versions of the Epigrams of Martial, this critic wrote, *Epigrams against Martial.* Latterly, for want of employment, our Abbé began a translation of the Bible; but having inserted the notes of the visionary Isaac de la Peyrere, the work was burnt by order of the ecclesiastical court. He was also an abundant writer in verse, and exultingly told a poet, that his verses cost him little: "They cost you what they are worth," replied the sarcastic critic. De Marolles in his *Memoirs* bitterly complains of the injustice done to him by his contemporaries; and says, that in spite of the little favour shown to him by the

public, he has nevertheless published, by an accurate calculation, one hundred and thirty-three thousand one hundred and twenty-four verses! Yet this was not the heaviest of his literary sins. He is a proof that a translator may perfectly understand the language of his original, and yet produce an unreadable translation.

In the early part of his life this unlucky author had not been without ambition; it was only when disappointed in his political projects that he resolved to devote himself to literature. As he was incapable of attempting original composition, he became known by his detestable versions. He wrote above eighty volumes, which have never found favour in the eyes of the critics; yet his translations are not without their use, though they never retain by any chance a single passage of the spirit of their originals.

The most remarkable anecdote respecting these translations is, that whenever this honest translator came to a difficult passage, he wrote in the margin, "I have not translated this passage, because it is very difficult, and in truth I could never understand it." He persisted to the last in his uninterrupted amusement of printing books; and his readers having long ceased, he was compelled to present them to his friends, who, probably, were not his readers. After a literary existence of forty years, he gave the public a work not destitute of entertainment in his own Memoirs, which he dedicated to his relations and all his illustrious friends. The singular postcript to his Epistle Dedicatory contains excellent advice for authors.

"I have omitted to tell you, that I do not advise any one of my relatives or friends to apply himself as I have done to study, and particularly to the composition of books, if he thinks that will add to his fame or fortune. I am persuaded that of all persons in the kingdom, none are more neglected than those who devote themselves entirely to literature. The small number of successful persons in that class (at present I do not recollect more than two or three) should not impose on one's understanding, nor any consequence from them be drawn in favour of others. I know how it is by my own experience, and by that of several amongst you, as well as by many who are now no more, and with whom I was acquainted. Believe me, gentlemen! to pretend to the favours of fortune it is only necessary to render one's self useful, and to be supple and obsequious to those who are in possession of credit and authority; to be handsome in one's person; to adulate the powerful; to smile, while you suffer from them every kind of ridicule and contempt whenever they shall do you the honour to amuse themselves with you; never to be frightened at a thousand obstacles which may be opposed to one; have a face of brass and a heart of stone; insult worthy men who are persecuted; rarely venture to speak the truth; appear devout, with every nice scruple of religion, while at the same time every duty must be abandoned when it clashes with your interest. After these any other accomplishment is indeed superfluous."

MYSTERIES, MORALITIES, FARCES, AND SOTTIES.

The origin of the theatrical representations of the ancients have been traced back to a Grecian stroller singing in a cart to the honour of Bacchus. Our European exhibitions, perhaps as rude in their commencement, were likewise for a long time devoted to pious purposes, under the titles of Mysteries and Moralities. Of these primeval compositions of the drama of modern Europe, I have collected some anecdotes and some specimens.

It appears that pilgrims introduced these devout spectacles. Those who returned from the Holy Land or other consecrated places composed canticles of their travels, and amused their religious fancies by interweaving scenes of which Christ, the Apostles, and other objects of devotion, served as the themes. Menestrier informs us that these pilgrims travelled in troops, and stood in the public streets, where they recited their poems, with their staff in hand; while their chaplets and cloaks, covered with shells and images of various colours, formed a picturesque exhibition, which at length excited the piety of the citizens to erect occasionally a stage on an extensive spot of ground. These spectacles served as the amusement and instruction of the people. So attractive were these gross exhibitions in the middle ages, that they formed one of the principal ornaments of the reception of princes on their public entrances.

When the Mysteries were performed at a more improved period, the actors were distinguished characters, and frequently consisted of the ecclesiastics of the neighbouring villages, who incorporated themselves under the title of *Confrères de la Passion.* Their productions were divided, not into acts, but into different days of performance, and they were performed in the open plain. This was at least conformable to the critical precept of that mad knight whose opinion is noticed by Pope. It appears by a MS. in the Harleian library, that they were thought to contribute so much to the information and instruction of the people, that one of the Popes granted a pardon of one thousand days to every person who resorted peaceably to the plays performed in the Whitsun-week at Chester, beginning with the "Creation," and ending with the "General Judgment." These were performed at the expense of the different corporations of that city, and the reader may smile at the ludicrous combinations. "The Creation" was performed by the Drapers; the "Deluge" by the Dyers; "Abraham, Melchisedech, and Lot," by the Barbers; "The Purification" by the Blacksmiths; "The Last Supper" by the Bakers; the "Resurrection" by the Skinners; and the "Ascension" by the Tailors. In these pieces the actors represented the person of the Almighty without being sensible of the gross impiety. So unskilful were they in this infancy of the theatrical art, that very serious consequences were produced by their ridiculous blunders and ill-managed machinery. The following singular

anecdotes are preserved, concerning a Mystery which took up several days in the performance.

"In the year 1437, when Conrad Bayer, bishop of Metz, caused the Mystery of 'The Passion' to be represented on the plain of Veximel near that city, *God* was *an old gentleman*, named Mr. Nicholas Neufchatel of Touraine, curate of Saint Victory of Metz, and who was very near expiring on the cross had he not been timely assisted. He was so enfeebled, that it was agreed another priest should be placed on the cross the next day, to finish the representation of the person crucified, and which was done; at the same time Mr. Nicholas undertook to perform 'The Resurrection,' which being a less difficult task, he did it admirably well."—Another priest, whose name was Mr. John de Nicey, curate of Metrange, personated Judas, and he had like to have been stifled while he hung on the tree, for his neck slipped; this being at length luckily perceived, he was quickly cut down and recovered.

John Bouchet, in his "Annales d'Aquitaine," a work which contains many curious circumstances of the times, written with that agreeable simplicity which characterises the old writers, informs us, that in 1486 he saw played and exhibited in Mysteries by persons of Poitiers, "The Nativity, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ," in great triumph and splendour; there were assembled on this occasion most of the ladies and gentlemen of the neighbouring counties.

We will now examine the Mysteries themselves. I

prefer for this purpose to give a specimen from the French, which are livelier than our own. It is necessary to premise to the reader, that my versions being in prose will probably lose much of that quaint expression and vulgar *naïveté* which prevail through the originals, written in octosyllabic verses.

One of these Mysteries has for its subject the election of an apostle to supply the place of the traitor Judas. A dignity so awful is conferred in the meanest manner; it is done by drawing straws, of which he who gets the longest becomes the apostle. Louis Chocquet was a favourite composer of these religious performances: when he attempts the pathetic, he has constantly recourse to devils; but, as these characters are sustained with little propriety, his pathos succeeds in raising a laugh. In the following dialogue Anne and Caiaphas are introduced conversing about St. Peter and St. John:

ANNE.

I remember them once very honest people. They have often brought their fish to my house to sell.

CAIAPHAS.

Is this true?

ANNE.

By God, it is true; my servants remember them very well. To live more at their ease they have left off business; or perhaps they were in want of customers. Since that time they have followed Jesus, that wicked heretic, who has taught them magic; the fellow understands necromancy, and is the greatest magician alive, as far as Rome itself.

St. John, attacked by the satellites of Domitian,

amongst whom the author has placed Longinus and Patroclus, gives regular answers to their insulting interrogatories. Some of these I shall transcribe; but leave to the reader's conjectures the replies of the Saint, which are not difficult to anticipate.

PARTHEMIA.

You tell us strange things, to say there is but one God in three persons.

LONGINUS.

Is it any where said that we must believe your old prophets (with whom your memory seems overburdened) to be more perfect than our gods?

PATROCLUS.

You must be very cunning to maintain impossibilities. Now listen to me: Is it possible that a virgin can bring forth a child without ceasing to be a virgin?

DOMITIAN.

Will you not change these foolish sentiments? Would you pervert us? Will you not convert yourself? Lords! you perceive now very clearly what an obstinate fellow this is! Therefore let him be stripped and put into a great caldron of boiling oil. Let him die at the Latin Gate.

PESART.

The great devil of hell fetch me if I don't Latinise him well. Never shall they hear at the Latin Gate any one sing so well as he shall sing.

TORNEAU.

I dare venture to say he won't complain of being frozen.

PATROCLUS.

Frita, run quick; bring wood and coals, and make the caldron ready.

FRITA.

I promise him, if he has the gout or the itch, he will soon get rid of them.

St. John dies a perfect martyr, resigned to the boiling oil and gross jests of Patroclus and Longinus. One is astonished in the present times at the excessive absurdity, and indeed blasphemy, which the writers of these Moralities permitted themselves, and, what is more extraordinary, were permitted by an audience consisting of a whole town. An extract from the "Mystery of St. Dennis" is in the Duke de la Vallière's "Bibliothèque du Théâtre François depuis son Origine: Dresde, 1768."

The emperor Domitian, irritated against the Christians, persecutes them, and thus addresses one of his courtiers:—

Seigneurs Romains, j'ai entendu	Roman lords, I understand
Que d'un crucifix d'un pendu,	That of a crucified hanged man
On fait un Dieu par notre empire,	They make a God in our kingdom,
Sans ce qu'on le nous daigne dire.	Without even deigning to ask our permission.

He then orders an officer to seize on Dennis in France. When this officer arrives at Paris, the inhabitants acquaint him of the rapid and grotesque progress of this future saint:—

Sire, il preche un Dieu a Paris	Sir, he preaches a God at Paris
Qui fait tout les mouls et les vauls.	Who has made mountain and valley.
Il va à cheval sans chevauls.	He goes a horseback without horses.
Il fait et defait tout ensemble.	He does and undoes at once.

Il vit, il meurt, il sue, il tremble.	He lives, he dies, he sweats, he trembles.
Il pleure, il vit, il veille, et dort.	He weeps, he laughs, he wakes, and sleeps.
Il est jeune et vieux, foible et forte.	He is young and old, weak and strong.
Il fait d'un coq une poulette.	He turns a cock into a hen.
Il jeue des arts de roulette,	He knows how to conjure with cup and ball,
Ou je ne sçais que ce peut être.	Or I do not know who this can be.

Another of these admirers says, evidently alluding to the rite of baptism,—

Sire, oyez que fait ce fol prestre :	Sir, hear what this mad priest does :
Il prend de l'yaue en une escuele,	He takes water out of a ladle,
Et gete aux gens sur la cervele,	And, throwing it at people's heads,
Et dit que partant, sont sauves!	He says that when they depart, they are saved!

This piece then proceeds to entertain the spectators with the tortures of St. Dennis, and at length, when more than dead, they mercifully behead him: the Saint, after his decapitation, rises very quietly, takes his head under his arm, and walks off the stage in all the dignity of martyrdom.

It is justly observed by Bayle on these wretched representations, that while they prohibited the people from meditating on the sacred history in the book which contains it in all its purity and truth, they permitted them to see it on the theatre sullied with a thousand gross inventions, which were expressed in the most vulgar manner and in a farcical style. Warton, with

his usual elegance, observes, "To those who are accustomed to contemplate the great picture of human follies which the unpolished ages of Europe hold up to our view, it will not appear surprising that the people who were forbidden to read the events of the sacred history in the Bible, in which they are faithfully and beautifully related, should at the same time be permitted to see them represented on the stage disgraced with the grossest improprieties, corrupted with inventions and additions of the most ridiculous kind, sullied with impurities, and expressed in the language and gesticulations of the lowest farce." Elsewhere he philosophically observes that, however, they had their use, "not only teaching the great truths of scripture to men who could not read the Bible, but in abolishing the barbarous attachment to military games and the bloody contentions of the tournament, which had so long prevailed as the sole species of popular amusement. Rude, and even ridiculous as they were, they softened the manners of the people by diverting the public attention to spectacles in which the mind was concerned, and by creating a regard for other arts than those of bodily strength and savage valour."

Mysteries are to be distinguished from *Moralities*, and *Farces*, and *Sotties*. *Moralities* are dialogues where the interlocutors represented feigned or allegorical personages. *Farces* were more exactly what their title indicates—obscene, gross, and dissolute representations, where both the actions and words are alike reprehensible.

The *Sotties* were more farcical than farce, and frequently had the licentiousness of pasquinades. I shall give an ingenious specimen of one of the MORALITIES. This Morality is entitled "The Condemnation of Feasts, to the Praise of Diet and Sobriety for the Benefit of the Human Body."

The perils of gormandising form the present subject. Towards the close is a trial between *Feasting* and *Supper*. They are summoned before *Experience*, the Lord Chief Justice! *Feasting* and *Supper* are accused of having murdered four persons by force of gorging them. *Experience* condemns *Feasting* to the gallows; and his executioner is *Diet*. *Feasting* asks for a father-confessor, and makes a public confession of so many crimes, such numerous convulsions, apoplexies, head-aches, stomach-qualms, &c. which he has occasioned, that his executioner *Diet* in a rage stops his mouth, puts the cord about his neck, and strangles him. *Supper* is only condemned to load his hands with a certain quantity of lead, to hinder him from putting too many dishes on table: he is also bound over to remain at the distance of six hours' walking from *Dinner* under pain of death. *Supper* felicitates himself on his escape, and swears to observe the mitigated sentence.

The MORALITIES were allegorical dramas, whose tediousness seems to have delighted a barbarous people not yet accustomed to perceive that what was obvious might be omitted to great advantage: like children, everything must be told in such an age; their own unexercised imagination cannot supply anything.

Of the FARCES the licentiousness is extreme, but their pleasantry and their humour are not contemptible. The "Village Lawyer," which is never exhibited on our stage without producing the broadest mirth, originates among these ancient drolleries. The humorous incident of the shepherd, who having stolen his master's sheep, is advised by his lawyer only to reply to his judge by mimicking the bleating of a sheep, and when the lawyer in return claims his fee, pays him by no other coin, is discovered in these ancient farces. Bruyes got up the ancient farce of the "*Patelin*" in 1702, and we borrowed it from him.

They had another species of drama still broader than Farce, and more strongly featured by the grossness, the severity, and personality of satire:—these were called *Sotties*, of which the following one I find in the Duke de la Vallière's "Bibliothèque du Théâtre François."

The actors come on the stage with their fools'-caps each wanting the right ear, and begin with stringing satirical proverbs, till, after drinking freely, they discover that their fools'-caps want the right ear. They call on their old grand-mother *Sottie* (or Folly), who advises them to take up some trade. She introduces this progeny of her fools to the *World*, who takes them into his service. The *World* tries their skill, and is much displeased with their work. The *Cobler*-fool pinches his feet by making the shoes too small; the *Tailor*-fool hangs his coat too loose or too tight about him; the *Priest*-fool says his masses either too short or too tedious. They all agree that the *World* does not know what he

wants, and must be sick, and prevail upon him to consult a physician. The *World* obligingly sends what is required to a Urine-doctor, who instantly pronounces that "the *World* is as mad as a March hare!" He comes to visit his patient, and puts a great many questions on his unhappy state. The *World* replies, "that what most troubles his head is the idea of a new deluge by fire, which must one day consume him to a powder;" on which the physician gives this answer:—

Et te troubles-tu pour cela?	And you really trouble yourself about this?
Monde, tu ne te troubles pas	Oh *World!* you do not trouble yourself about
De voir ce larrons attrapars	Seeing those impudent rascals
Vendre et acheter benefices;	Selling and buying livings;
Les enfans en bras des Nourices	Children in the arms of their nurses
Estre Abbés, Eveques, Prieurs,	Made Abbots, Bishops and Priors
Chevaucher tres bien les deux soeurs,	Intriguing with girls.
Tuer les gens pour leurs plaisirs,	Killing people for their pleasures,
Jouer le leur, l'autrui saisir,	Minding their own interests, and seizing on what belongs to another,
Donner aux flatteurs audience,	Lending their ears to flatterers,
Faire la guerre à toute outrance	Making war, exterminating war,
Pour un rien entre les chrestiens!	For a bubble, among christians!

The *World* takes leave of his physician, but retains his advice; and to cure his fits of melancholy gives himself up entirely to the direction of his fools. In a word, the *World* dresses himself in the coat and cap of *Folly*, and he becomes as gay and ridiculous as the rest of the fools.

This *Sottie* was represented in the year 1524.

Such was the rage for mysteries, that René d'Anjou, King of Naples and Sicily, and Count of Provence, had them magnificently represented and made them a serious concern. Being in Provence, and having received letters from his son the Prince of Calabria, who asked him for an immediate aid of men, he replied, that "he had a very different matter in hand, for he was fully employed in settling the order of a mystery—*in honour of God.*"

Strutt, in his "Manners and Customs of the English," has given a description of the stage in England when mysteries were the only theatrical performances. Vol. iii. p. 130.

"In the early dawn of literature, and when the sacred mysteries were the only theatrical performances, what is now called the stage did then consist of three several platforms, or stages raised one above another. On the uppermost sat the *Pater Cœlestis*, surrounded with his Angels; on the second appeared the Holy Saints, and glorified men; and the last and lowest was occupied by mere men who had not yet passed from this transitory life to the regions of eternity. On one side of this lowest platform was the resemblance of a dark pitchy cavern from whence issued appearance of fire and flames: and when it was necessary, the audience were treated with hideous yellings and noises as imitative of the howlings and cries of the wretched souls tormented by the relentless demons. From this yawning cave the devils themselves constantly ascended to delight and to

instruct the spectators:—to delight, because they were usually the greatest jesters and buffoons that then appeared; and to instruct, for that they treated the wretched mortals who were delivered to them with the utmost cruelty, warning thereby all men carefully to avoid the falling into the clutches of such hardened and remorseless spirits." An anecdote relating to an English mystery presents a curious specimen of the manners of our country, which then could admit of such a representation; the simplicity, if not the libertinism, of the age was great. A play was acted in one of the principal cities of England, under the direction of the trading companies of that city, before a numerous assembly of both sexes, wherein *Adam* and *Eve* appeared on the stage entirely naked, performed their whole part in the representation of Eden, to the serpent's temptation, to the eating of the forbidden fruit, the perceiving of, and conversing about their nakedness, and to the supplying of fig-leaves to cover it. Warton observes they had the authority of scripture for such a representation, and they gave matters just as they found them in the third chapter of Genesis. The following article will afford the reader a specimen of an *Elegant Morality*.

LOVE AND FOLLY, AN ANCIENT MORALITY.

One of the most elegant Moralities was composed by Louise L'Abé; the Aspasia of Lyons in 1550, adored by her cotemporaries. With no extraordinary beauty, she however displayed the fascination of classical learn-

ing, and a vein of vernacular poetry refined and fanciful. To accomplishments so various she added the singular one of distinguishing herself by a military spirit, and was nick-named Captain Louise. She was a fine rider and a fine lutanist. She presided in the assemblies of persons of literature and distinction. Married to a rope-manufacturer, she was called *La belle Cordière*, and her name is still perpetuated by that of the street she lived in. Her anagram was *Belle à Soy*.—But she was *belle* also for others. Her *Morals* in one point were not correct, but her taste was never gross: the ashes of her perishable graces may preserve themselves sacred from our severity: but the productions of her genius may still delight.

Her Morality entitled "Débat de Folie et d'Amour —the Contest of *Love and Folly*," is divided into five parts, and contains six mythological or allegorical personages. This division resembles our five acts, which, soon after the publication of this Morality, became generally practised.

In the first part, *Love* and *Folly* arrive at the same moment at the gate of Jupiter's palace, to join a festival to which he had invited the Gods. *Folly* observing *Love* just going to step in at the hall, pushes him aside and enters first. *Love* is enraged, but *Folly* insists on her precedency. *Love*, perceiving there was no reasoning with *Folly*, bends his bow and shoots an arrow; but she baffled his attempt by rendering herself invisible. She in her turn becomes furious, falls on

the boy, tearing out his eyes, and then covers them with a bandage which could not be taken off.

In the second part, *Love*, in despair for having lost his sight, implores the assistance of his mother; she tries in vain to undo the magic fillet; the knots are never to be unloosed.

In the third part, Venus presents herself at the foot of the throne of Jupiter to complain of the outrage committed by *Folly* on her son. Jupiter commands *Folly* to appear.—She replies, that though she has reason to justify herself, she will not venture to plead her cause, as she is apt to speak too much, or to omit what should be said. *Folly* asks for a counsellor, and chooses Mercury; Apollo is selected by Venus. The fourth part consists of a long dissertation between Jupiter and *Love*, on the manner of loving. *Love* advises Jupiter, if he wishes to taste of truest happiness, to descend on earth, to lay down all his majesty, and, in the figure of a mere mortal, to please some beautiful maiden: "Then wilt thou feel quite another contentment than that thou hast hitherto enjoyed: instead of a single pleasure it will be doubled; for there is as much pleasure to be loved as to love." Jupiter agrees that this may be true, but he thinks that to attain this it requires too much time, too much trouble, too many attentions,—and that after all it is not worth them.

In the fifth part, Apollo, the advocate for Venus, in a long pleading demands justice against *Folly*. The Gods, seduced by his eloquence, show by their indig-

nation that they would condemn *Folly* without hearing her advocate Mercury. But Jupiter commands silence, and Mercury replies. His pleading is as long as the adverse party's, and his arguments in favour of *Folly* are so plausible, that when he concludes his address, the gods are divided in opinion; some espouse the cause of *Love*, and some that of *Folly*. Jupiter, after trying in vain to make them agree together, pronounces this award:—

"On account of the difficulty and importance of your disputes and the diversity of your opinions, we have suspended your contest from this day to three times seven times nine centuries. In the mean time we command you to live amicably together, without injuring one another. *Folly* shall lead *Love*, and take him whithersoever he pleases, and when restored to his sight, the Fates may pronounce sentence."

Many beautiful conceptions are scattered in this elegant morality. It has given birth to subsequent imitations; it was too original and playful an idea not to be appropriated by the poets. To this morality we perhaps owe the panegyric of *Folly* by Erasmus, and the *Love* and *Folly* of La Fontaine.

RELIGIOUS NOUVELLETTES.

I SHALL notice a class of very singular works, in which the spirit of romance has been called in to render religion more attractive to certain heated imaginations.

In the fifteenth century was published a little book

of *prayers*, accompanied by *figures*, both of a very uncommon nature for a religious publication. It is entitled *Hortulus Animæ cum Oratiunculis aliquibus superadditis quæ in prioribus Libris non habentur.*

It is a small octavo *en lettres Gothiques* printed by John Grunninger, 1500. "A garden," says the author, "which abounds with flowers for the pleasure of the soul;" but they are full of poison. In spite of his fine promises, the chief part of these meditations are as puerile as they are superstitious. This we might excuse, because the ignorance and superstition of the times allowed such things; but the *figures* which accompany this work are to be condemned in all ages; one represents Saint Ursula and some of her eleven thousand virgins, with all the licentious inventions of an Aretine. What strikes the ear does not so much irritate the senses, observes the sage Horace, as what is presented in all its nudity to the eye. One of these designs is only ridiculous: David is represented as examining Bathsheba bathing, while Cupid hovering throws his dart, and with a malicious smile triumphs in his success. We have had many gross anachronisms in similar designs. There is a laughable picture in a village in Holland, in which Abraham appears ready to sacrifice his son Isaac by a loaded blunderbuss; but his pious intention is entirely frustrated by an angel urining in the pan. In another painting, the Virgin receives the annunciation of the angel Gabriel with a huge chaplet of beads tied round her waist, reading her own offices, and kneeling before a crucifix; another happy invention,

to be seen on an altar-piece at Worms, is that in which the Virgin throws Jesus in the hopper of a mill, while from the other side he issues changed into little morsels of bread, with which the priests feast the people. Matthison, a modern traveller, describes a picture in a church at Constance, called the Conception of the Holy Virgin. An old man lies on a cloud, whence he darts out a vast beam, which passes through a dove hovering just below; at the end of a beam appears a large transparent egg, in which egg is seen a child in swaddling clothes with a glory round it. Mary sits leaning in an arm chair, and opens her mouth to receive the egg.

I must not pass unnoticed in this article a production as extravagant in its design, in which the author prided himself in discussing three thousand questions concerning the Virgin Mary.

The publication now adverted to was not presented to the world in a barbarous age and in a barbarous country, but printed at Paris in 1668. It bears for title, *Devote Salutation des Membres sacres du Corps de la Glorieuse Vièrge, Mère de Dieu.* That is, "A Devout Salutation of the Holy Members of the Body of the Glorious Virgin, Mother of God." It was printed and published with an approbation and privilege! which is more strange than the work itself. Valois reprobates it in these just terms: "What would Innocent XI. have done, after having abolished the shameful *Office of the Conception, Indulgences,* &c. if he had seen a volume in which the impertinent devotion of that visionary monk caused to be printed, with permission of his superiors, Meditations on all the Parts of

the Body of the Holy Virgin? Religion, decency, and good sense, are equally struck at by such an extravagance." I give a specimen of the most decent of these *salutations*.

Salutation to the Hair.

"I salute you, charming hair of Maria! Rays of the mystical sun! Lines of the centre and circumference of all created perfection! Veins of gold of the mine of love! Chains of the prison of God! Roots of the tree of life! Rivulets of the fountain of Paradise! Strings of the bow of charity! Nets that caught Jesus, and shall be used in the hunting-day of souls!"

Salutation to the Ears.

"I salute ye, intelligent ears of Maria! ye presidents of the princes of the poor! Tribunal for their petitions; salvation at the audience of the miserable! University of all divine wisdom! Receivers general of all wards! Ye are pierced with the rings of our chains; ye are impearled with our necessities!"

The images, prints, and miniatures, with which the catholic religion has occasion to decorate its splendid ceremonies, have frequently been consecrated to the purposes of love: they have been so many votive offerings worthy to have been suspended in the temple of Idalia. Pope Alexander VI. had the images of the Virgin made to represent some of his mistresses; the famous Vanozza, his favourite, was placed on the altar of Santa Maria del Popolo; and Julia Farnese furnished a subject for another Virgin. The same genius of pious

gallantry also visited our country. The statuaries made the queen of Henry III. a model for the face of the Virgin Mary. Hearne elsewhere affirms, that the Virgin Mary was generally made to bear a resemblance to the queens of the age, which, no doubt, produced some real devotion among the courtiers.

The prayer-books of certain pious libertines were decorated with the portraits of their favourite minions and ladies in the characters of saints, and even of the Virgin and Jesus. This scandalous practice was particularly prevalent in that reign of debauchery in France, when Henry III. held the reins of government with a loose hand. In a missal once appertaining to the queen of Lewis XII. may be seen a mitred ape, giving its benediction to a man prostrate before it; a keen reproach to the clergy of that day. Charles V., however pious that emperor affected to be, had a missal painted for his mistress by the great Albert Durer, the borders of which are crowded with extravagant grotesques, consisting of apes, who were sometimes elegantly sportive, giving clysters to one another, and in more offensive attitudes, not adapted to heighten the piety of the Royal Mistress. This missal has two French verses written by the Emperor himself, who does not seem to have been ashamed of his present. The Italians carried this taste to excess. The manners of our country were more rarely tainted with this deplorable licentiousness, although I have observed an innocent tendency towards it, by examining the illuminated manuscripts of our ancient metrical romances: while we admire the vivid

colouring of these splendid manuscripts, the curious observer will perceive that almost every heroine is represented in a state which appears incompatible with her reputation. Most of these works are, I believe, by French artists.

A supplement might be formed to religious indecencies from the Golden Legend, which abounds in them. Henry Stephens's Apology for Herodotus might be likewise consulted with effect for the same purpose. There is a story of St. Mary the Egyptian, who was perhaps a looser liver than Mary Magdalen; for not being able to pay for her passage to Jerusalem, whither she was going to adore the holy cross and sepulchre, in despair she thought of an expedient in lieu of payment to the ferryman, which required at least going twice, instead of once, to Jerusalem as a penitential pilgrimage. This anecdote presents the genuine character of certain *devotees*.

Melchior Inchoffer, a jesuit, published a book to vindicate the miracle of a *Letter* which the Virgin Mary had addressed to the citizens of Messina: when Naudé brought him positive proofs of its evident forgery, Inchoffer ingenuously confessed the imposture, but pleaded that it was done by the *orders* of his *superiors*.

This same *letter* of the Virgin Mary was like a *donation* made to her by Louis the Eleventh of the *whole county* of Boulogne, retaining, however, for *his own use the revenues!* This solemn act bears the date of the year 1478, and is entitled, "Conveyance of Louis the Eleventh to the Virgin of Boulogne, of the right and

title of the fief and homage of the county of Boulogne, which is held by the Count of Saint Pol, to render a faithful account before the image of the said lady."

Maria Agreda, a religious visionary, wrote *the Life of the Virgin*. She informs us that she resisted the commands of God and the holy Mary till the year 1637, when she began to compose this curious rhapsody. When she had finished this *original* production, her confessor advised her to *burn* it; she obeyed. Her friends, however, who did not think her less inspired than she informed them she was, advised her to rewrite the work. When printed it spread rapidly from country to country: new editions appeared at Lisbon, Madrid, Perpignan, and Antwerp. It was the rose of Sharon for those climates. There are so many pious absurdities in this book, which were found to give such pleasure to the devout, that it was solemnly honoured with the censure of the Sorbonne; and it spread the more.

The head of this lady was quite turned by her religion. In the first six chapters she relates the visions of the Virgin, which induced her to write her own life. She begins the history *ab ovo*, as it may be expressed; for she has formed a narrative of what passed during the nine months in which the Virgin was confined in the womb of her mother St. Anne. After the birth of Mary she received an augmentation of angelic guards; we have several conversations which God held with the Virgin during the first eighteen months after her birth. And it is in this manner she formed *a circulating novel*,

which delighted the female devotees of the seventh century.

The worship paid to the Virgin Mary in Spain and Italy exceeds that which is given to the Son or the Father. When they pray to Mary, their imagination pictures a beautiful woman, they really feel a *passion;* while Jesus is only regarded as a *Bambino*, or infant at the breast, and the *Father* is hardly ever recollected; but the *Madona*, *la Senhora*, *la Maria Santa*, while she inspires their religious inclinations, is a mistress to those who have none.

Of similar works there exists an entire race, and the libraries of the curious may yet preserve a shelf of these religious *nouvellettes*. The Jesuits were the usual authors of these rhapsodies. I find an account of a book which pretends to describe what passes in Paradise. A Spanish Jesuit published at Salamanca a volume in folio, 1652, entitled *Empyreologia*. He dwells with great complacency on the joys of the celestial abode; there always will be music in heaven with material instruments as our ears are already accustomed to; otherwise he thinks the celestial music would not be music for us! But another Jesuit is more particular in his accounts. He positively assures us that we shall experience a supreme pleasure in kissing and embracing the bodies of the blessed; they will bathe in the presence of each other, and for this purpose there are most agreeable baths in which we shall swim like fish; that we shall all warble as sweetly as larks and nightingales; that the angels will dress themselves in female habits, their hair curled; wearing petti-

coats and fardingales, and with the finest linen; that men and women will amuse themselves in masquerades, feasts, and balls.—Women will sing more agreeably than men to heighten these entertainments, and at the resurrection will have more luxuriant tresses, ornamented with ribands and head-dresses as in this life!

Such were the books once so devoutly studied, and which doubtless were often literally understood. How very bold must the minds of the Jesuits have been, and how very humble those of their readers, that such extravagancies should ever be published! And yet, even to the time in which I am now writing,—even at this day,—the same picturesque and impassioned pencil is employed by the modern Apostles of Mysticism—the Swedenborghians,—the Moravians,—the Methodists!

I find an account of another book of this class, ridiculous enough to be noticed. It has for title, "The Spiritual Kalendar, composed of as many Madrigals or Sonnets and Epigrams as there are days in the year; written for the consolation of the pious and the curious. By Father G. Cortade, Austin Preacher at Bayonne, 1665." To give a notion of this singular collection take an Epigram addressed to a Jesuit, who, young as he was, used to *put spurs under his shirt* to mortify the outer man! The Kalendar-poet thus gives a point to these spurs:—

Il ne pourra donc plus ni ruer ni hennir
Sous le rude Eperon dont tu fais son supplice;
Qui vit jamais tel artifice,
De piquer un cheval pour le mieux retenir!

HUMBLY IMITATED.

Your body no more will neigh and will kick,
The point of the spur must eternally prick ;
Whoever contrived a thing with such skill,
To keep spurring a horse to make him stand still!

One of the most extravagant works projected on the subject of the Virgin Mary was the following :— The prior of a convent in Paris had reiteratedly entreated Varillas the historian to examine a work composed by one of his monks ; and of which — not being himself addicted to letters—he wished to be governed by his opinion. Varillas at length yielded to the entreaties of the prior ; and to regale the critic, they laid on two tables for his inspection seven enormous volumes in folio !

This rather disheartened our reviewer : but greater was his astonishment, when, having opened the first volume, he found its title to be *Summa Dei-paræ* ; and as Saint Thomas had made a *Sum,* or System of Theology, so our monk had formed a *System* of the *Virgin !* He immediately comprehended the design of our good father, who had laboured on this work full thirty years, and who boasted he had treated *Three Thousand* Questions concerning the Virgin ; of which he flattered himself not a single one had ever yet been imagined by any one but himself !

Perhaps a more extraordinary design was never known. Varillas, pressed to give his judgment on this work, advised the prior with great prudence and good-nature to amuse the honest old monk with the hope of printing

these seven folios, but always to start some new difficulties; for it would be inhuman to occasion so deep a chagrin to a man who had reached his 74th year, as to inform him of the nature of his favourite occupations; and that after his death he should throw the seven folios into the fire.

"CRITICAL SAGACITY," AND "HAPPY CONJECTURE;" OR, BENTLEY'S MILTON.

> —— Bentley, long to wrangling schools confined,
> And but by books acquainted with mankind ——
> To Milton lending sense, to Horace wit,
> He makes them write, what never poet writ.

Dr. Bentley's edition of our English Homer is sufficiently known by name. As it stands a terrifying beacon to conjectural criticism, I shall just notice some of those violations which the learned critic ventured to commit with all the arrogance of a Scaliger. This man, so deeply versed in ancient learning, it will appear was destitute of taste and genius in his native language.

Our critic, to persuade the world of the necessity of his edition, imagined a fictitious editor of Milton's Poems: and it was this ingenuity which produced all his absurdities. As it is certain that the blind bard employed an amanuensis, it was not improbable that many words of similar sound, but very different signification, might have disfigured the poem; but our Doctor was bold enough to conjecture that this amanuensis *interpolated* whole verses of his own composition in the "Paradise Lost!" Having laid down this fatal position,

all the consequences of his folly naturally followed it. Yet if there needs any conjecture, the more probable one will be, that Milton, who was never careless of his future fame, had his poem *read* to him after it had been published. The first edition appeared in 1667, and the second in 1674, in which all the faults of the former edition are continued. By these *faults*, the Doctor means what *he* considers to be such: for we shall soon see that his "Canons of Criticism" are apocryphal.

Bentley says that he will *supply* the want of manuscripts to collate (to use his own words) by his own "SAGACITY," and "HAPPY CONJECTURE."

Milton, after the conclusion of Satan's speech to the fallen angels, proceeds thus:—

1. He spake: and to confirm his words out flew
2. Millions of flaming SWORDS, drawn from the thighs
3. Of mighty cherubim: the sudden blaze
4. Far round illumin'd hell; highly they rag'd
5. Against the Highest: and fierce with grasped ARMS
6. Clash'd on their sounding shields the din of war,
7. Hurling defiance tow'rd the VAULT of Heaven.

In this passage, which is as perfect as human wit can make, the Doctor alters three words. In the second line he puts *blades* instead of *swords;* in the fifth he puts *swords* instead of *arms;* and in the last line he prefers *walls* to *vault*. All these changes are so many defœdations of the poem. The word *swords* is far more poetical than *blades*, which may as well be understood of *knives* as *swords*. The word *arms*, the generic for the specific term, is still stronger and nobler than *swords;*

and the beautiful conception of *vault*, which is always indefinite to the eye, while the solidity of *walls* would but meanly describe the highest Heaven, gives an idea of grandeur and modesty.

Milton writes, book i. v. 63—

> No light, but rather DARKNESS VISIBLE
> Served only to discover sights of woe.

Perhaps borrowed from Spenser:—

> A little glooming light, much like a shade.
> *Faery Queen*, b. i. c. 2. st. 14.

This fine expression of "DARKNESS VISIBLE" the Doctor's critical sagacity has thus rendered clearer:—

> "No light, but rather A TRANSPICUOUS GLOOM."

Again our learned critic distinguishes the 74th line of the first book—

> As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole,

as "a vicious verse," and therefore with "happy conjecture," and no taste, thrusts in an entire verse of his own composition—

> "DISTANCE, WHICH TO EXPRESS ALL MEASURE FAILS."

Milton *writes*—

> Our torments, also, may in length of time
> Become our elements. B. ii. ver. 274.

Bentley CORRECTS.—

> "*Then*, AS WAS WELL OBSERV'D, our torments may
> Become our elements."

A curious instance how the insertion of a single prosaic expression turns a fine verse into something worse than the vilest prose.

To conclude with one more instance of critical emendation: Milton says, with an agreeable turn of expression,—

> So parted they; the angel up to heaven,
> From the thick shade; and Adam to his bower.

Bentley "conjectures" these two verses to be inaccurate, and in lieu of the last writes—

"ADAM, TO RUMINATE ON PAST DISCOURSE."

And then our erudite critic reasons! as thus:—

After the conversation between the Angel and Adam in the bower, it may be well presumed that our first parent waited on his heavenly guest at his departure to some little distance from it, till he began to take his flight towards heaven; and therefore "sagaciously" thinks that the poet could not with propriety say that the Angel parted from the *thick shade*, that is, the *bower*, to go to heaven. But if Adam attended the Angel no farther than the door or entrance of the bower, then he shrewdly asks, "How Adam could return to his bower if he was never out of it?"

Our editor has made a thousand similar corrections in his edition of Milton! Some have suspected that the same kind intention which prompted Dryden to persuade Creech to undertake a translation of Horace influenced those who encouraged our Doctor, in thus exercising

his "sagacity" and "happy conjecture" on the epic of Milton. He is one of those learned critics who have happily "elucidated their author into obscurity," and comes nearest to that "true conjectural critic" whose practice a Portuguese satirist so greatly admired: by which means, if he be only followed up by future editors, we might have that immaculate edition, in which little or nothing should be found of the original!

I have collected these few instances as not uninteresting to men of taste; they may convince us that a scholar may be familiarised to Greek and Latin, though a stranger to his vernacular literature; and that a verbal critic may sometimes be successful in his attempts on a *single word*, though he may be incapable of tasting an *entire sentence*. Let it also remain as a gibbet on the high roads of literature; that "conjectural critics" as they pass may not forget the unhappy fate of Bentley.

The following epigram appeared on this occasion:—

ON MILTON'S EXECUTIONER.

Did MILTON'S PROSE, O CHARLES! thy death defend?
A furious foe, unconscious, proves a friend;
On MILTON'S VERSE does BENTLEY comment? know,
A weak officious friend becomes a foe.
While he would seem his author's fame to further,
The MURDEROUS CRITIC has aveng'd THY MURDER.

The classical learning of Bentley was singular and acute; but the erudition of words is frequently found not to be allied to the sensibility of taste.

A JANSENIST DICTIONARY.

When L'Advocat published his concise Biographical Dictionary, the Jansenists, the methodists of France, considered it as having been written with a view to depreciate the merit of *their* friends. The spirit of party is too soon alarmed. The Abbé Barral undertook a dictionary devoted to their cause. In this labour, assisted by his good friends the Jansenists, he indulged all the impetuosity and acerbity of a splenetic adversary. The abbé was, however, an able writer; his anecdotes are numerous and well chosen; and his style is rapid and glowing. The work bears for title "Dictionnaire Historique, Littéraire, et Critique des Hommes Celèbrés," 6 vols. 8vo. 1759. It is no unuseful speculation to observe in what manner a faction represents those who have not been its favourites: for this purpose I select the characters of Fenelon, Cranmer, and Luther.

Of Fenelon they write, "He composed for the instruction of the Dukes of Burgundy, Anjou, and Berri, several works; amongst others, the Telemachus—a singular book, which partakes at once of the character of a romance and of a poem, and which substitutes a prosaic cadence for versification. But several luscious pictures would not lead us to suspect that this book issued from the pen of a sacred minister for the education of a prince; and what we are told by a famous poet is not improbable, that Fenelon did not compose it at court, but that it is the fruits of his retreat in his diocese.

And indeed the amours of Calypso and Eucharis should not be the first lessons that a minister ought to give his scholars; and, besides, the fine moral maxims which the author attributes to the Pagan divinities are not well placed in their mouth. Is not this rendering homage to the demons of the great truths which we receive from the Gospel, and to despoil J. C. to render respectable the annihilated gods of paganism? This prelate was a wretched divine, more familiar with the light of profane authors than with that of the fathers of the church. Phelipeaux has given us, in his narrative of 'Quietism,' the portrait of the friend of Madame Guyon. This archbishop has a lively genius, artful and supple, which can flatter and dissimulate, if ever any could. Seduced by a woman, he was solicitous to spread his seduction. He joined to the politeness and elegance of conversation a modest air, which rendered him amiable. He spoke of spirituality with the expression and the enthusiasm of a prophet; with such talents he flattered himself that every thing would yield to him."

In this work the Protestants, particularly the first Reformers, find no quarter; and thus virulently their rabid catholicism exults over the hapless end of Cranmer, the first protestant archbishop:—

"Thomas Cranmer married the sister of Osiander. As Henry VIII. detested married priests, Cranmer kept this second marriage in profound secrecy. This action serves to show the character of this great reformer, who is the hero of Burnet, whose history is so much esteemed in England. What blindness to suppose him an Atha-

nasius, who was at once a Lutheran secretly married, a consecrated archbishop under the Roman pontiff whose power he detested, saying the mass in which he did not believe, and granting a power to say it! The divine vengeance burst on this sycophantic courtier, who had always prostituted his conscience to his fortune."

Their character of Luther is quite Lutheran in one sense, for Luther was himself a stranger to moderate strictures:—

"The furious Luther, perceiving himself assisted by the credit of several princes, broke loose against the church with the most inveterate rage, and rung the most terrible alarum against the pope. According to him we should have set fire to every thing, and reduced to one heap of ashes the pope and the princes who supported him. Nothing equals the rage of this phrenetic man, who was not satisfied with exhaling his fury in horrid declamations, but who was for putting all in practice. He raised his excesses to the height by inveighing against the vow of chastity, and in marrying publicly Catherine de Bore, a nun, whom he enticed, with eight others, from their convents. He had prepared the minds of the people for this infamous proceeding by a treatise which he entitled 'Examples of the Papistical Doctrine and Theology,' in which he condemns the praises which all the saints had given to continence. He died at length quietly enough, in 1546, at Isleben, his country place—God reserving the terrible effects of his vengeance to another life."

Cranmer, who perished at the stake, these fanatic

religionists proclaim as an example of "divine vengeance;" but Luther, the true parent of the Reformation, "died quietly at Isleben:" this must have puzzled their mode of reasoning; but they extricate themselves out of the dilemma by the usual way. Their curses are never what the lawyers call "lapsed legacies."

MANUSCRIPTS AND BOOKS.

It would be no uninteresting literary speculation to describe the difficulties which some of our most favourite works encountered in their manuscript state, and even after they had passed through the press. Sterne, when he had finished his first and second volumes of Tristram Shandy, offered them to a bookseller at York for fifty pounds; but was refused: he came to town with his MSS.; and he and Robert Dodsley agreed in a manner of which neither repented.

The Rosciad, with all its merit, lay for a considerable time in a dormant state, till Churchill and his publisher became impatient, and almost hopeless of success.—Burn's Justice was disposed of by its author, who was weary of soliciting booksellers to purchase the MS., for a trifle, and it now yields an annual income. Collins burnt his odes before the door of his publisher. The publication of Dr. Blair's Sermons was refused by Strahan, and the "Essays on the Immutability of Truth," by Dr. Beattie, could find no publisher, and was printed by two friends of the author, at their joint expense.

"The sermon in Tristram Shandy" (says Sterne, in

his preface to his Sermons) "was printed by itself some years ago, but could find neither purchasers nor readers." When it was inserted in his eccentric work, it met with a most favourable reception, and occasioned the others to be collected.

Joseph Warton writes, "When Gray published his exquisite Ode on Eton College, his first publication, little notice was taken of it." The Polyeucte of Corneille, which is now accounted to be his master-piece, when he read it to the literary assembly held at the Hotel de Rambouillet, was not approved. Voiture came the next day, and in gentle terms acquainted him with the unfavourable opinion of the critics. Such ill judges were then the most fashionable wits of France.

It was with great difficulty that Mrs. Centlivre could get her "Busy Body" performed. Wilks threw down his part with an oath of detestation—our comic authoress fell on her knees and wept.—Her tears, and not her wit, prevailed.

A pamphlet published in the year 1738, entitled "A Letter to the Society of Booksellers, on the Method of forming a true Judgment of the Manuscripts of Authors," contains some curious literary intelligence, and is as follows:—

"We have known books," says our writer, "that in the MS. have been damned, as well as others which seem to be so, since, after their appearance in the world, they have often lain by neglected. Witness the 'Paradise Lost' of the famous Milton, and the Optics of Sir Isaac Newton, which last, 'tis said, had no character or

credit here till noticed in France. 'The Historical Connection of the Old and New Testament,' by Shuckford, is also reported to have been seldom inquired after for about a twelvemonth's time; however, it made a shift, though not without some difficulty, to creep up to a second edition, and afterwards even to a third. And, which is another remarkable instance, the manuscript of Dr. Prideaux's 'Connection' is well known to have been bandied about from hand to hand among several, at least five or six, of the most eminent booksellers, during the space of at least two years, to no purpose, none of them undertaking to print that excellent work. It lay in obscurity, till Archdeacon Echard, the author's friend, strongly recommended it to Tonson. It was purchased, and the publication was very successful. Robinson Crusoe's manuscript also ran through the whole trade, nor would any one print it, though the writer, De Foe, was in good repute as an author. One bookseller at last, not remarkable for his discernment, but for his speculative turn, engaged in this publication. *This* bookseller got above a thousand guineas by it; and the booksellers are accumulating money every hour by editions of this work in all shapes. The undertaker of the translation of Rapin, after a very considerable part of the work had been published, was not a little dubious of its success, and was strongly inclined to drop the design. It proved at last to be a most profitable literary adventure." It is, perhaps, useful to record, that while the fine compositions of genius and the elaborate labours of erudition are doomed to encounter these obstacles to

fame, and never are but slightly remunerated, works of another description are rewarded in the most princely manner; at the recent sale of a bookseller, the copyright of "Vyse's Spelling-book" was sold at the enormous price of 2,200*l.*; with an annuity of 50 guineas to the author!

THE TURKISH SPY.

WHATEVER may be the defects of the "Turkish Spy," the author has shown one uncommon merit, by having opened a new species of composition, which has been pursued by other writers with inferior success, if we except the charming "Persian Letters" of Montesquieu. The "Turkish Spy" is a book which has delighted our childhood, and to which we can still recur with pleasure. But its ingenious author is unknown to three parts of his admirers.

In Boswell's "Life of Johnson" is this dialogue concerning the writer of the "Turkish Spy." "B.—Pray, Sir, is the 'Turkish Spy' a genuine book? J.—No, Sir. Mrs. Manley, in her 'Life,' says, that *her father wrote the two first volumes;* and in another book—'Dunton's Life and Errours,' we find that the rest was *written* by *one Sault*, at two guineas a sheet, under the direction of Dr. Midgeley."

I do not know on what authority Mrs. Manley advances that her father was the author; but this lady was never nice in detailing facts. Dunton, indeed, gives some information in a very loose manner. He tells us, p. 242, that it is probable, by reasons which he insinu-

ates, that *one Bradshaw*, a hackney author, was the writer of the "Turkish Spy." This man probably was engaged by Dr. Midgeley to translate the volumes as they appeared, at the rate of 40*s.* per sheet. On the whole, all this proves, at least, how little the author was known while the volumes were publishing, and that he is as little known at present by the extract from Boswell.

The ingenious writer of the Turkish Spy is John Paul Marana, an Italian; so that the Turkish Spy is just as real a personage as Cid Hamet, from whom Cervantes says he had his "History of Don Quixote." Marana had been imprisoned for a political conspiracy; after his release he retired to Monaco, where he wrote the "History of the Plot," which is said to be valuable for many curious particulars. Marana was at once a man of letters and of the world. He had long wished to reside at Paris; in that emporium of taste and luxury his talents procured him patrons. It was during his residence there that he produced his "Turkish Spy." By this ingenious contrivance he gave the history of the last age. He displays a rich memory, and a lively imagination; but critics have said that he touches every thing, and penetrates nothing. His first three volumes greatly pleased: the rest are inferior. Plutarch, Seneca, and Pliny, were his favourite authors. He lived in philosophical mediocrity; and in the last years of his life retired to his native country, where he died in 1693.

Charpentier gave the first particulars of this ingenious man. Even in his time the volumes were read as they came out, while its author remained unknown.

Charpentier's proof of the author is indisputable; for he preserved the following curious certificate, written in Marana's own hand-writing.

"I, the under-written John Paul Marana, author of a manuscript Italian volume, entitled '*L'Esploratore Turco, tomo terzo,*' acknowledge that Mr. Charpentier, appointed by the Lord Chancellor to revise the said manuscript, has not granted me his certificate for printing the said manuscript, but on condition to rescind four passages. The first beginning, &c. By this I promise to suppress from the said manuscript the places above marked, so that there shall remain no vestige; since, without agreeing to this, the said certificate would not have been granted to me by the said Mr. Charpentier; and for surety of the above, which I acknowledge to be true, and which I promise punctually to execute, I have signed the present writing. Paris, 28th September, 1686.

"JOHN PAUL MARANA."

This paper serves as a curious instance in what manner the censors of books clipped the wings of genius when it was found too daring or excursive.

These rescindings of the Censor appear to be marked by Marana in the printed work. We find more than once chasms, with these words: "the beginning of *this* letter is wanting in the Italian translation; the *original* paper *being torn.*"

No one has yet taken the pains to observe the date of the first editions of the French and the English Turkish Spies, which would settle the disputed origin.

It appears by the document before us, to have been originally *written* in Italian, but probably was first *published* in French. Does the English Turkish Spy differ from the French one?

SPENSER, JONSON, AND SHAKSPEARE.

The characters of these three great masters of English poetry are sketched by Fuller, in his "Worthies of England." It is a literary morsel that must not be passed by. The criticisms of those who lived in or near the times when authors flourished merit our observation. They sometimes elicit a ray of intelligence, which later opinions do not always give.

He observes on SPENSER—"The many *Chaucerisms* used (for I will not say affected by him) are thought by the ignorant to be *blemishes*, known by the learned to be *beauties*, to his book; which, notwithstanding, had been more SALEABLE, if more conformed to our modern language."

On JONSON.—"His parts were not so ready *to run of themselves*, as able to answer the spur; so that it may be truly said of him, that he had an *elaborate wit*, wrought out by his own industry.—He would *sit silent* in learned company, and suck in (*besides wine*) their several humours into his observation. What was *ore* in *others*, he was able to *refine* himself.

"He was paramount in the dramatic part of poetry, and taught the stage an exact conformity to the laws of comedians. His comedies were above the *Volge* (which are only tickled with downright obscenity), and took

not so well at the *first stroke* as at the *rebound*, when beheld the second time; yea, they will endure reading so long as either ingenuity or learning are fashionable in our nation. If his latter be not so spriteful and vigorous as his first pieces, all that are old will, and all who desire to be old should, excuse him therein."

On SHAKSPEARE.—"He was an eminent instance of the truth of that rule, *poëta non fit, sed nascitur;* one is not made, but born a poet. Indeed his *learning* was but very little; so that as *Cornish diamonds* are not polished by any lapidary, but are pointed and smoothed, even as they are taken out of the earth, so *Nature* itself was all the *art* which was used upon him.

"Many were the *wit-combats* betwixt him and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a *Spanish great galleon*, and an *English man of war*. Master *Jonson* (like the former) was built far higher in learning; *solid*, but *slow* in his performances. *Shakspeare*, with an English man of war, lesser in *bulk*, but lighter in *sailing*, could *turn with all tides*, and take advantage of *all winds*, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Had these "Wit-combats," between Shakspeare and Jonson, which Fuller notices, been chronicled by some faithful *Boswell* of the age, our literary history would have received an interesting accession. A letter has been published by Dr. Berkenhout relating to an evening's conversation between our great rival bards, and Alleyn the actor. Peele, a dramatic poet, writes to his friend Marlow, another poet. The Doctor unfortunately in giving this copy did not recollect his authority.

"FRIEND MARLOW,

"I never longed for thy companye more than last night: we were all very merrye at the Globe, where Ned Alleyn did not scruple to affirme pleasantly to thy friend WILL, that he had stolen his speeche about the qualityes of an actor's excellencye in Hamlet his Tragedye, from conversations manyfold which had passed between them, and opinyons given by Alleyn touchinge this subject. SHAKSPEARE did not take this talk in good sorte; but JONSON put an end to the strife, by wittylie remarking,—this affaire needeth no contention: you stole it from NED, no doubt, do not marvel; have you not seen him act times out of number?"

This letter is one of those ingenious forgeries which the late George Steevens practised on the literary antiquary; they were not always of this innocent cast. The present has been frequently quoted as an original document. I have preserved it as an example of *Literary Forgeries*, and the danger which literary historians incur by such nefarious practices.

BEN JONSON, FELTHAM, AND RANDOLPH.

BEN JONSON, like most celebrated wits, was very unfortunate in conciliating the affections of his brother writers. He certainly possessed a great share of arrogance, and was desirous of ruling the realms of Parnassus with a despotic sceptre. That he was not always successful in his theatrical compositions is evident from his abusing, in their title-page, the actors and the public. In this he has been imitated by Fielding. I have collected the following three satiric odes, written when the

reception of his "*New Inn*, or *The Light Heart*," warmly exasperated the irritable disposition of our poet.

He printed the title in the following manner:

"*New Inn*, or *The Light Heart*; a Comedy never acted, but most negligently played by some, the King's servants; and more squeamishly beheld and censured by others, the King's subjects, 1629. Now at last set at liberty to the readers, his Majesty's servants and subjects, to be judged, 1631."

At the end of this play he published the following Ode, in which he threatens to quit the stage for ever; and turn at once a Horace, an Anacreon, and a Pindar.

"The just indignation the author took at the vulgar censure of his play, begat this following Ode to himself:

Come, leave the loathed stage,
And the more loathsome age;
Where pride and impudence (in fashion knit)
Usurp the chair of wit
Inditing and arraigning every day
Something they call a play.
Let their fastidious, vaine
Commission of braine
Run on, and rage, sweat, censure, and condemn;

They were not made for thee,—less thou for them.
Say that thou pour'st them wheat,
And they will acorns eat;
'Twere simple fury, still, thyself to waste
On such as have no taste!
To offer them a surfeit of pure bread,
Whose appetites are dead!
No, give them graines their fill,
Husks, draff, to drink and swill.
If they love lees, and leave the lusty wine,
Envy them not their palate with the swine.

No doubt some mouldy tale
Like Pericles*, and stale
As the shrieve's crusts, and nasty as his fish-
Scraps, out of every dish
Thrown forth, and rak't into the common-tub,
May keep up the play-club:
There sweepings do as well
As the best order'd meale.
For who the relish of these guests will fit,
Needs set them but the almes-basket of wit.

And much good do't you then,
Brave plush and velvet men
Can feed on orts, and safe in your stage clothes,
Dare quit, upon your oathes,
The stagers, and the stage-wrights too (your peers),
Of larding your large ears
With their foul comic socks,
Wrought upon twenty blocks:
Which, if they're torn, and turn'd, and patch'd enough,
The gamesters share your guilt, and you their stuff.

Leave things so prostitute,
And take the Alcæick lute,
Or thine own Horace, or Anacreon's lyre;
Warm thee by Pindar's fire;
And, tho' thy nerves be shrunk, and blood be cold,
Ere years have made thee old,
Strike that disdainful heat
Throughout, to their defeat;
As curious fools, and envious of thy strain,
May, blushing, swear no palsy's in thy brain†.

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* This play, Langbaine says, is written by Shakspeare.

† He had the palsy at that time.

But when they hear thee sing
The glories of thy King,
His zeal to God, and his just awe o'er men
They may blood-shaken then,
Feel such a flesh-quake to possess their powers,
As they shall cry like ours,
In sound of peace, or wars,
No harp ere hit the stars,
In tuning forth the acts of his sweet raign,
And raising Charles his chariot 'bove his wain.

This Magisterial Ode, as Langbaine calls it, was answered by *Owen Feltham*, author of the admirable "Resolves," who has written with great satiric acerbity the retort corteous. His character of this poet should be attended to:—

AN ANSWER TO THE ODE, COME LEAVE THE LOATHED STAGE, &c.

Come leave this sawcy way
Of baiting those that pay
Dear for the sight of your declining wit:
'Tis known it is not fit
That a sale poet, just contempt once thrown,
Should cry up thus his own.
I wonder by what dower,
Or patent, you had power
From all to rape a judgment. Let't suffice,
Had you been modest, y'ad been granted wise.

'Tis known you can do well,
And that you do excell
As a translator; but when things require
A genius, and fire,
Not kindled heretofore by other pains,
As oft y'ave wanted brains

And art to strike the white,
As you have levell'd right:
Yet if men vouch not things apocryphal,
You bellow, rave, and spatter round your gall.

Jug, Pierce, Peek, Fly*, and all
Your jests so nominal,
Are things so far beneath an able brain,
As they do throw a stain
Thro' all th' unlikely plot, and do displease
As deep as Pericles.
Where yet there is not laid
Before a chamber-maid
Discourse so weigh'd†, as might have serv'd of old
For schools, when they of love and valour told.

Why rage, then? when the show
Should judgment be, and know-‡
ledge, there are plush who scorn to drudge
For stages, yet can judge
Not only poets looser lines, but wits,
And all their perquisits;
A gift as rich as high
Is noble poese:
Yet, tho' in sport it be for Kings to play,
'Tis next mechanicks' when it works for pay.

Alcæus lute had none,
Nor loose Anacreon
E'er taught so bold assuming of the bays
When they deserv'd no praise.

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* The names of several of Jonson's Dramatis Personæ.

† New Inn, Act iii. Scene 2.—Act iv. Scene 4.

‡ This break was purposely designed by the poet, to expose that singular one in Ben's third stanza.

To rail men into approbation
Is new to your's alone:
And prospers not: for know,
Fame is as coy, as you
Can be disdainful; and who dares to prove
A rape on her shall gather scorn,—not love.

Leave then this humour vain,
And this more humorous strain,
Where self-conceit, and choler of the blood,
Eclipse what else is good:
Then, if you please those raptures high to touch,
Whereof you boast so much:
And but forbear your crown
Till the world puts it on:
No doubt, from all you may amazement draw,
Since braver theme no Phœbus ever saw.

To console dejected Ben for this just reprimand, Randolph, one of the adopted poetical sons of Jonson, addressed him with all that warmth of grateful affection which a man of genius should have felt on the occasion.

AN ANSWER TO MR. BEN JONSON'S ODE, TO PERSUADE HIM NOT TO LEAVE THE STAGE.

I.

Ben, do not leave the stage
Cause 'tis a loathsome age;
For pride and impudence will grow too bold,
When they shall hear it told
They frighted thee: Stand high, as is thy cause;
Their hiss is thy applause:
More just were thy disdain,
Had they approved thy vein:
So thou for them, and they for thee were born
They to incense, and thou as much to scorn.

II.

Wilt thou engross thy store
Of wheat, and pour no more,
Because their bacon-brains had such a taste
As more delight in mast:
No! set them forth a board of dainties, full
As thy best muse can cull;
Whilst they the while do pine
And thirst, midst all their wine.
What greater plague can hell itself devise,
han to be willing thus to tantalize?

III.

Thou canst not find them stuff,
That will be bad enough
To please their pallates: let 'em them refuse,
For some pye-corner muse;
She is too fair an hostess, 'twere a sin
For them to like thine Inn:
'Twas made to entertain
Guests of a nobler strain;
Yet, if they will have any of the store,
Give them some scraps, and send them from thy dore.

IV.

And let those things in plush
Till they be taught to blush,
Like what they will, and more contented be
With what Broom* swept from thee.

* His man, Richard Broome, wrote with success several comedies. He had been the amanuensis or attendant of Jonson. The epigram made against Pope for the assistance W. Broome gave him appears to have been borrowed from this pun. Johnson has inserted it in "Broome's Life."

I know thy worth, and that thy lofty strains
Write not to cloaths, but brains:
But thy great spleen doth rise,
'Cause moles will have no eyes:
This only in my Ben I faulty find,
He's angry they'll not see him that are blind.

V.

Why shou'd the scene be mute
Cause thou canst touch the lute
And string thy Horace? Let each Muse of nine
Claim thee, and say, th' art mine.
'Twere fond, to let all other flames expire,
To sit by Pindar's fire:
For by so strange neglect
I should myself suspect
Thy palsie* were as well thy brain's disease,
If they could shake thy muse which way they please.

VI.

And tho' thou well canst sing
The glories of thy King,
And on the wings of verse his chariot bear
To heaven, and fix it there;
Yet let thy muse as well some raptures raise
To please him, as to praise.
I would not have thee chuse
Only a treble muse;
But have this envious, ignorant age to know,
Thou that canst sing so high, canst reach as low.

ARIOSTO AND TASSO.

It surprises one to find among the literary Italians the merits of Ariosto most keenly disputed: slaves to clas-

* He had the palsy at that time.

sical authority, they bend down to the majestic regularity of Tasso. Yet the father of Tasso, before his son had rivalled the romantic Ariosto, describes in a letter the effect of the "Orlando" on the people:—"There is no man of learning, no mechanic, no lad, no girl, no old man, who are satisfied to read the 'Orlando Furioso' once. This poem serves as the solace of the traveller, who fatigued on his journey deceives his lassitude by chanting some octaves of this poem. You may hear them sing these stanzas in the streets and in the fields every day." One would have expected that Ariosto would have been the favourite of the people, and Tasso of the critics. But in Venice the gondoliers, and others, sing passages which are generally taken from Tasso, and rarely from Ariosto. A different fate, I imagined, would have attended the poet who has been distinguished by the epithet of "*The Divine.*" I have been told by an Italian man of letters, that this circumstance arose from the relation which Tasso's poem bears to Turkish affairs; as many of the common people have passed into Turkey, either by chance or by war. Besides, the long antipathy existing between the Venetians and the Turks gave additional force to the patriotic poetry of Tasso. We cannot boast of any similar poems. Thus it was that the people of Greece and Ionia sang the poems of Homer.

The Accademia della Crusca gave a public preference to Ariosto. This irritated certain critics, and none more than Chapelain, who could *taste* the regularity of

Tasso, but not *feel* the "brave disorder" of Ariosto. He could not approve of those writers,

> "Who snatch a grace beyond the reach of art."

"I thank you," he writes, "for the sonnet which your indignation dictated, at the Academy's preference of Ariosto to Tasso. This judgment is overthrown by the confessions of many of the *Cruscanti*, my associates. It would be tedious to enter into its discussion; but it was passion and not equity that prompted that decision. We confess, that, as to what concerns invention and purity of language, Ariosto has eminently the advantage over Tasso; but majesty, pomp, numbers, and a style truly sublime, united to regularity of design, raise the latter so much above the other that no comparison can fairly exist."

The decision of Chapelain is not unjust; though I did not know that Ariosto's language was purer than Tasso's.

Dr. Cocchi, the great Italian critic, compared "Ariosto's poem to the richer kind of harlequin's habit, made up of pieces of the very best silk, and of the liveliest colours. The parts of it are, many of them, *more beautiful* than in Tasso's poem, but the whole in Tasso is without comparison more of a piece and better made." The critic was extricating himself as safely as he could out of this critical dilemma; for the disputes were then so violent, that I think one of the disputants took to his bed, and was said to have died of Ariosto and Tasso.

It is the conceit of an Italian to give the name of *April* to *Ariosto*, because it is the season of *flowers;* and that of *September* to *Tasso*, which is that of *fruits*. Tiraboschi judiciously observes that no comparison ought to be made between these great rivals. It is comparing "Ovid's Metamorphoses" with "Virgil's Æneid;" they are quite different things. In his characters of the two poets, he distinguishes between a romantic poem and a regular epic. Their designs required distinct perfections. But an English reader is not enabled by the wretched versions of Hoole to echo the verse of La Fontaine, "Je cheris l'Arioste et j'estime Le Tasse."

Boileau, some time before his death, was asked by a critic if he had repented of his celebrated decision concerning the merits of Tasso, whom some Italians had compared with those of Virgil? Boileau had hurled his bolts at these violators of classical majesty. It is supposed that he was ignorant of the Italian language, but some expressions in his answer may induce us to think that he was not.

"I have so little changed my opinion, that on a *re-perusal* lately of Tasso, I was sorry that I had not more amply explained myself on this subject in some of my reflections on 'Longinus.' I should have begun by acknowledging that Tasso had a sublime genius, of great compass, with happy dispositions for the higher poetry. But when I came to the use he made of his talents, I should have shown that judicious discernment rarely prevailed in his works. That in the greater portion of his narrations he attached himself to the agree-

able oftener than to the just. That his descriptions are almost always overcharged with superfluous ornaments. That in painting the strongest passions, and in the midst of the agitations they excite, frequently he degenerates into witticisms, which abruptly destroy the pathetic. That he abounds with images of too florid a kind; affected turns; conceits and frivolous thoughts; which, far from being adapted to his Jerusalem, could hardly be supportable in his 'Aminta.' So that all this, opposed to the gravity, the sobriety, the majesty of Virgil, what is it but tinsel compared with gold?"

The merits of Tasso seem here precisely discriminated; and this criticism must be valuable to the lovers of poetry. The errors of Tasso were national.

In Venice the gondoliers know by heart long passages from Ariosto and Tasso, and often chant them with a peculiar melody. Goldoni, in his life, notices the gondolier returning with him to the city: "He turned the prow of the gondola towards the city, singing all the way the twenty-sixth stanza of the sixteenth canto of the Jerusalem Delivered." The late Mr. Barry once chanted to me a passage of Tasso in the manner of the Gondoliers; an anonymous gentleman has greatly obliged me with his account of the recitation of these poets by the Gondoliers of Venice.

There are always two concerned, who alternately sing the strophes. We know the melody eventually by Rousseau, to whose songs it is printed; it has properly no melodious movement, and is a sort of medium between the canto fermo and the canto figurato; it approaches to

the former by recitativical declamation, and to the latter by passages and course, by which one syllable is detained and embellished.

I entered a gondola by moonlight: one singer placed himself forwards, and the other aft, and thus proceeded to St. Giorgio. One began the song: when he had ended his strophe the other took up the lay, and so continued the song alternately. Throughout the whole of it, the same notes invariably returned, but, according to the subject-matter of the strophe, they laid a greater or a smaller stress, sometimes on one, and sometimes on another note, and indeed changed the enunciation of the whole strophe, as the object of the poem altered.

On the whole, however, their sounds were hoarse and screaming: they seemed, in the manner of all rude uncivilised men, to make the excellency of their singing consist in the force of their voice: one seemed desirous of conquering the other by the strength of his lungs, and so far from receiving delight from this scene (shut up as I was in the box of the gondola), I found myself in a very unpleasant situation.

My companion, to whom I communicated this circumstance, being very desirous to keep up the credit of his countrymen, assured me that this singing was very delightful when heard at a distance. Accordingly we got out upon the shore, leaving one of the singers in the gondola, while the other went to the distance of some hundred paces. They now began to sing against one another; and I kept walking up and down between them both, so as always to leave him who was to begin

his part. I frequently stood still, and hearkened to the one and to the other.

Here the scene was properly introduced. The strong declamatory, and, as it were, shrieking sound, met the ear from far, and called forth the attention; the quickly succeeding transitions, which necessarily required to be sung in a lower tone, seemed like plaintive strains succeeding the vociferations of emotion or of pain. The other, who listened attentively, immediately began where the former left off, answering him in milder or more vehement notes, according as the purport of the strophe required. The sleepy canals, the lofty buildings, the splendour of the moon, the deep shadows of the few gondolas that moved like spirits hither and thither, increased the striking peculiarity of the scene, and amidst all these circumstances it was easy to confess the character of this wonderful harmony.

It suits perfectly well with an idle solitary mariner, lying at length in his vessel at rest on one of these canals, waiting for his company or for a fare; the tiresomeness of which situation is somewhat alleviated by the songs and poetical stories he has in memory. He often raises his voice as loud as he can, which extends itself to a vast distance over the tranquil mirror; and, as all is still around, he is as it were in a solitude in the midst of a large and populous town. Here is no rattling of carriages, no noise of foot passengers; a silent gondola glides now and then by him, of which the splashing of the oars is scarcely to be heard.

At a distance he hears another, perhaps utterly

unknown to him. Melody and verse immediately attach the two strangers; he becomes the responsive echo to the former, and exerts himself to be heard as he had heard the other. By a tacit convention they alternate verse for verse; though the song should last the whole night through, they entertain themselves without fatigue; the hearers, who are passing between the two, take part in the amusement.

This vocal performance sounds best at a great distance, and is then inexpressibly charming, as it only fulfils its design in the sentiment of remoteness. It is plaintive, but not dismal in its sound; and at times it is scarcely possible to refrain from tears. My companion, who otherwise was not a very delicately organised person, said quite unexpectedly, "E singolare come quel canto intenerisce, e molto più quando la cantano meglio."

I was told that the women of Libo, the long row of islands that divides the Adriatic from the Lagouns, particularly the women of the extreme districts of Malamocca and Palestrina, sing in like manner the works of Tasso to these and similar tunes.

They have the custom, when their husbands are fishing out at sea, to sit along the shore in the evenings and vociferate these songs, and continue to do so with great violence, till each of them can distinguish the responses of her own husband at a distance.

How much more delightful and more appropriate does this song show itself here, than the call of a solitary person uttered far and wide, till another equally disposed shall hear and answer him! It is the expression of a

vehement and hearty longing, which yet is every moment nearer to the happiness of satisfaction.

Lord Byron has told us that with the independence of Venice the song of the gondolier has died away —

"In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more."

If this be not more poetical than true, it must have occurred at a moment when their last political change may have occasioned this silence on the waters. My servant *Tita*, who was formerly the servant of his lordship, and whose name has been immortalised in the "Italy" of Mr. Rogers, was himself a gondolier. He assures me that every night on the river the chant may be heard. Many who cannot even read have acquired the whole of Tasso, and some chant the stanzas of Ariosto. It is a sort of poetical challenge, and he who cannot take up the subject by continuing it is held as vanquished, and which occasions him no slight vexation. In the note of Lord Byron's works, this article is quoted by mistake as written by me, though I had mentioned it as the contribution of a stranger. We find, in this note of Lord Byron's works, that there are two kinds of Tasso; the original, and another called the "*Canta alla Barcariola*," a spurious Tasso in the Venetian dialect: this latter, however, is rarely used. In the same note, a printer's error has been perpetuated through all the editions; the name of *Barry*, the painter, has been printed *Berry*.

BAYLE.

Few philosophers were more deserving of the title than Bayle. His last hour exhibits the Socratic intrepidity with which he encountered the formidable approach of death. I have seen the original letter of the bookseller Leers, where he describes the death of our philosopher. "On the evening preceding his decease, having studied all day, he gave my corrector some copy of his 'Answer to Jacquelot,' and told him that he was very ill. At nine in the morning his laundress entered his chamber; he asked her, with a dying voice, if his fire was kindled? and a few moments after he died." His disease was an hereditary consumption, and his decline must have been gradual; speaking had become with him a great pain, but he laboured with the same tranquillity of mind to his last hour; and, with Bayle, it was death alone which could interrupt the printer.

The irritability of genius is forcibly characterised by this circumstance in his literary life. When a close friendship had united him to Jurieu, he lavished on him the most flattering eulogiums: he is the hero of his "Republic of Letters." Enmity succeeded to friendship; Jurieu is then continually quoted in his "Critical Dictionary," whenever an occasion offers to give instances of gross blunders, palpable contradictions, and inconclusive arguments. These inconsistent opinions may be sanctioned by the similar conduct of a *Saint!* St. Jerome praised Rufinus as the most learned man of

his age, while his friend; but when the same Rufinus joined his adversary Origen, he called him one of the most ignorant!

As a logician Bayle had no superior: the best logician will, however, frequently deceive himself. Bayle made long and close arguments to show that La Motte le Vayer never could have been a preceptor to the king; but all his reasonings are overturned by the fact being given in the "History of the Academy," by Pelisson.

Basnage said of Bayle, that *he read much by his fingers*. He meant that he ran over a book more than he read it; and that he had the art of always falling upon that which was most essential and curious in the book he examined.

There are heavy hours in which the mind of a man of letters is unhinged; when the intellectual faculties lose all their elasticity, and when nothing but the simplest actions are adapted to their enfeebled state. At such hours it is recorded of the Jewish Socrates, Moses Mendelsohn, that he would stand at his window, and count the tiles of his neighbour's house. An anonymous writer has told of Bayle, that he would frequently wrap himself in his cloak, and hasten to places where mountebanks resorted; and that this was one of his chief amusements. He is surprised that so great a philosopher should delight in so trifling an object. This objection is not injurious to the character of Bayle; it only proves that the writer himself was no philosopher.

The "Monthly Reviewer," in noticing this article, has continued the speculation by giving two interesting

anecdotes. "The observation concerning 'heavy hours,' and the want of elasticity in the intellectual faculties of men of letters, when the mind is fatigued and the attention blunted by incessant labour, reminds us of what is related by persons who were acquainted with the late sagacious magistrate Sir John Fielding; who, when fatigued with attending to complicated cases, and perplexed with discordant depositions, used to retire to a little closet in a remote and tranquil part of the house, to rest his mental powers and sharpen perception. He told a great physician, now living, who complained of the distance of places, as caused by the great extension of London, that 'he (the physician) would not have been able to visit many patients to any purpose, if they had resided nearer to each other; as he could have had no time either to think or to rest his mind.'"

Our excellent logician was little accustomed to a mixed society; his life was passed in study. He had such an infantine simplicity in his nature, that he would speak on anatomical subjects before the ladies with as much freedom as before surgeons. When they inclined their eyes to the ground, and while some even blushed, he would then inquire if what he spoke was indecent; and, when told so, he smiled and stopped. His habits of life were, however, extremely pure; he probably left himself little leisure "*to fall into temptation.*"

Bayle knew nothing of geometry, and, as Le Clerc informs us, acknowledged that he could never comprehend the demonstration of the first problem in Euclid. Le Clerc, however, was a rival to Bayle; with

greater industry and more accurate learning, but with very inferior powers of reasoning and philosophy. Both of these great scholars, like our Locke, were destitute of fine taste and poetical discernment.

When Fagon, an eminent physician, was consulted on the illness of our student, he only prescribed a particular regimen, without the use of medicine. He closed his consultation by a compliment remarkable for its felicity. "I ardently wish one could spare this great man all this constraint, and that it were possible to find a remedy as singular as the merit of him for whom it is asked."

Voltaire has said that Bayle confessed he would not have made his Dictionary exceed a folio volume, had he written only for himself, and not for the booksellers. This Dictionary, with all its human faults, is a stupendous work, which must last with literature itself. In my fourth volume I have taken an enlarged view of Bayle and his Dictionary.

CERVANTES.

M. Du Boulay accompanied the French ambassador to Spain, when Cervantes was yet living. "He told me," Segrais informs us, "that the ambassador one day complimented Cervantes on the great reputation he had acquired by his Don Quixote; and that Cervantes whispered in his ear, 'Had it not been for the Inquisition, I should have made my book much more entertaining.'"

Cervantes, at the battle of Lepanto, was wounded and

enslaved. He has given his own history in Don Quixote. He was known at the court of Spain, but he did not receive those favours which might have been expected; he was neglected. His first volume is the finest; and his design was to have finished there; but he could not resist the importunities of his friends, who engaged him to make a second, which has not the same force, although it has many splendid passages.

We have lost many good things of Cervantes, and other writers, through the tribunal of religion and dulness. One Aonius Palearius was sensible of this; and said, "that the Inquisition was a poniard aimed at the throat of literature." The image is striking, and the observation just; but the ingenious observer was in consequence soon led to the stake!

MAGLIABECHI.

Anthony Magliabechi, who died at the age of eighty, was celebrated for his great knowledge of books. He has been called the *Helluo*, or the Glutton of Literature, as Peter *Comestor* received his nick-name from his amazing voracity for food he could never digest; which appeared when having fallen sick of so much false learning, he threw it all up in his "*Sea of Histories*," which proved to be the history of all things, and a bad history of every thing. Magliabechi's character is singular; for though his life was wholly passed in libraries, being librarian to the Duke of Tuscany, he never *wrote* himself. There is a medal which represents

him sitting, with a book in one hand, and with a great number of books scattered on the ground. The candid inscription signifies, that "it is not sufficient to become learned to have read much, if we read without reflection." This is the only remains we have of his own composition that can be of service to posterity. A simple truth, which may however be inscribed in the study of every man of letters.

His habits of life were uniform. Ever among his books, he troubled himself with no other concern whatever; and the only interest he appeared to take for any living thing was his spiders. While sitting among his literary piles, he affected great sympathy for these weavers of webs, and perhaps in contempt of those whose curiosity appeared impertinent, he frequently cried out, "to take care not to hurt his spiders!" Although he lost no time in writing himself, he gave considerable assistance to authors who consulted him. He was himself an universal index to all authors; the late literary antiquary Isaac Reed resembled him. He had one book, among many others, dedicated to him, and this dedication consisted of a collection of titles of works which he had had at different times dedicated to him, with all the eulogiums addressed to him in prose and verse. When he died, he left his vast collection of books for the public use; they now compose the public library of Florence.

Heyman, a celebrated Dutch professor, visited this erudite librarian, who was considered as the ornament of Florence. He found him amongst his books, of

which the number was prodigious. Two or three rooms in the first story were crowded with them, not only along their sides, but piled in heaps on the floor; so that it was difficult to sit, and more so to walk. A narrow space was contrived, indeed, so that by walking sideways you might extricate yourself from one room to another. This was not all; the passage below stairs was full of books, and the staircase from the top to the bottom was lined with them. When you reached the second story, you saw with astonishment three rooms, similar to those below, equally so crowded, that two good beds in these chambers were also crammed with books.

This apparent confusion did not, however, hinder Magliabechi from immediately finding the books he wanted. He knew them all so well, that even to the least of them it was sufficient to see its outside, to say what it was; he knew his flock, as shepherds are said, by their faces; and indeed he read them day and night, and never lost sight of any. He ate on his books, he slept on his books, and quitted them as rarely as possible. During his whole life he only went twice from Florence; once to see Fiesoli, which is not above two leagues distant, and once ten miles further by order of the Grand Duke. Nothing could be more simple than his mode of life; a few eggs, a little bread, and some water, were his ordinary food. A drawer of his desk being open, Mr. Heyman saw there several eggs, and some money which Magliabechi had placed there for his daily use. But as this drawer was generally open, it frequently

happened that the servants of his friends, or strangers who came to see him, pilfered some of these things; the money or the eggs.

His dress was as cynical as his repasts. A black doublet, which descended to his knees; large and long breeches; an old patched black cloak; an amorphous hat, very much worn, and the edges ragged; a large neckcloth of coarse cloth, begrimed with snuff; a dirty shirt, which he always wore as long as it lasted, and which the broken elbows of his doublet did not conceal; and, to finish this inventory, a pair of ruffles which did not belong to the shirt. Such was the brilliant dress of our learned Florentine; and in such did he appear in the public streets, as well as in his own house. Let me not forget another circumstance; to warm his hands, he generally had a stove with fire fastened to his arms, so that his clothes were generally singed and burnt, and his hands scorched. He had nothing otherwise remarkable about him. To literary men he was extremely affable, and a cynic only to the eye; anecdotes almost incredible are related of his memory. It is somewhat uncommon that as he was so fond of literary *food*, he did not occasionally dress some dishes of his own invention, or at least some sandwiches to his own relish. He indeed should have written CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE. He was a living Cyclopædia, though a dark lantern.

Of such reading men, Hobbes entertained a very contemptible, if not a rash opinion. His own reading was inconsiderable, and he used to say, that if he had spent

as much time in *reading* as other men of learning, he should have been as *ignorant* as they. He put little value on a *large library*, for he considered all *books* to be merely *extracts* and *copies*, for that most authors were like sheep, never deviating from the beaten path. History he treated lightly, and thought there were more lies than truths in it. But let us recollect after all this, that Hobbes was a mere metaphysician, idolising his own vain and empty hypotheses. It is true enough that weak heads carrying in them too much reading may be staggered. Le Clerc observes of two learned men, De Marcily and Barthius, that they would have composed more useful works had they *read* less numerous authors, and digested the better writers.

ABRIDGERS.

Abridgers are a kind of literary men to whom the indolence of modern readers, and indeed the multiplicity of authors, give ample employment.

It would be difficult, observe the learned Benedictines, the authors of the Literary History of France, to relate all the unhappy consequences which ignorance introduced, and the causes which produced that ignorance. But we must not forget to place in this number the mode of reducing, by way of abridgment, what the ancients had written in bulky volumes. Examples of this practice may be observed in preceding centuries, but in the fifth century it began to be in general use. As the number of students and readers diminished,

authors neglected literature, and were disgusted with composition; for to write is seldom done, but when the writer entertains the hope of finding readers. Instead of original authors, there suddenly arose numbers of Abridgers. These men, amidst the prevailing disgust for literature, imagined they should gratify the public by introducing a mode of reading works in a few hours, which otherwise could not be done in many months; and, observing that the bulky volumes of the ancients lay buried in dust, without any one condescending to examine them, necessity inspired them with an invention that might bring those works and themselves into public notice, by the care they took of renovating them. This they imagined to effect by forming abridgments of these ponderous tomes.

All these Abridgers, however, did not follow the same mode. Some contented themselves with making a mere abridgment of their authors, by employing their own expressions, or by inconsiderable alterations. Others formed abridgments in drawing them from various authors, but from whose works they only took what appeared to them most worthy of observation, and embellished them in their own style. Others again, having before them several authors who wrote on the same subject, took passages from each, united them, and thus combined a new work; they executed their design by digesting in common-places, and under various titles, the most valuable parts they could collect, from the best authors they read. To these last ingenious scholars we owe the rescue of many valuable fragments

of antiquity. They fortunately preserved the best maxims, characters, descriptions, and curious matters which they had found interesting in their studies.

Some learned men have censured these Abridgers as the cause of our having lost so many excellent entire works of the ancients; for posterity becoming less studious was satisfied with these extracts, and neglected to preserve the originals, whose voluminous size was less attractive. Others, on the contrary, say that these Abridgers have not been so prejudicial to literature; and that had it not been for their care, which snatched many a perishable fragment from that shipwreck of letters which the barbarians occasioned, we should perhaps have had no works of the ancients remaining. Many voluminous works have been greatly improved by their Abridgers. The vast history of Trogus Pompeius was soon forgotten and finally perished, after the excellent epitome of it by Justin, who winnowed the abundant chaff from the grain.

Bayle gives very excellent advice to an Abridger when he shows that Xiphilin, in his "Abridgment of Dion," takes no notice of a circumstance very material for entering into the character of Domitian:—the recalling the empress Domitia after having turned her away for her intrigues with a player. By omitting this fact in the abridgment, and which is discovered through Suetonius, Xiphilin has evinced, he says, a deficient judgment; for Domitian's ill qualities are much better exposed, when it is known that he was mean-spirited

enough to restore to the dignity of empress the prostitute of a player.

Abridgers, Compilers, and Translators, are now slightly regarded; yet to form their works with skill requires an exertion of judgment, and frequently of taste, of which their contemners appear to have no due conception. Such literary labours it is thought the learned will not be found to want; and the unlearned cannot discern the value. But to such Abridgers as Monsieur Le Grand, in his "Tales of the Minstrels," and Mr. Ellis, in his "English Metrical Romances," we owe much; and such writers must bring to their task a congeniality of genius, and even more taste than their originals possessed. I must compare such to fine etchers after great masters:—very few give the feeling touches in the right place.

It is an uncommon circumstance to quote the Scriptures on subjects of *modern literature;* but on the present topic the elegant writer of the books of the Maccabees has delivered, in a kind of preface to that history, very pleasing and useful instructions to an *Abridger*. I shall transcribe the passages, being concise, from Book ii. Chap. ii. v. 23, that the reader may have it at hand.—

"All these things, I say, being declared by Jason of Cyrene, in *five books*, we will assay to *abridge* in one volume. We will be careful that they that will read may have *delight*, and that they that are desirous to commit to memory might have *ease*, and that all into

whose hands it comes might have *profit*." How concise and Horatian! He then describes his literary labours with no insensibility:—"To us that have taken upon us this painful labour of *abridging*, it was not easy, but a matter of *sweat* and *watching*."—And the writer employs an elegant illustration: "Even as it is no ease unto him that prepareth a banquet, and seeketh the benefit of others; yet for the pleasuring of many, we will undertake gladly this great pain; leaving to the author the exact handling of every particular, and labouring to follow the *rules of an Abridgment*." He now embellishes his critical account with a sublime metaphor to distinguish the original from the copier:—"For as the master builder of a new house must care for the whole building; but he that undertaketh to set it out, and point it, must seek out fit things for the adorning thereof; even so I think it is with us. To stand upon *every point*, and *go over things at large*, and to be *curious* in *particulars*, belongeth to the *first author* of the story; but to use *brevity*, and avoid *much labouring* of the work, is to be granted to him that will make an Abridgment."

Quintilian has not a passage more elegantly composed, nor more judiciously conceived.

PROFESSORS OF PLAGIARISM AND OBSCURITY.

Among the most singular characters in literature may be ranked those who do not blush to profess publicly its most dishonourable practices. The first vender of

printed sermons imitating manuscript, was, I think, Dr. Trusler. He to whom the following anecdotes relate had superior ingenuity. Like the famous orator Henley, he formed a school of his own. The present lecturer openly taught not to *imitate* the best authors, but to *steal* from them!

Richesource, a miserable declaimer, called himself "Moderator of the Academy of Philosophical Orators." He taught how a person destitute of literary talents might become eminent for literature; and published the principles of his art under the title of "The Mask of Orators; or the manner of disguising all kinds of composition; briefs, sermons, panegyrics, funeral orations, dedications, speeches, letters, passages," &c. I will give a notion of the work.—

The author very truly observes, that all who apply themselves to polite literature do not always find from their own funds a sufficient supply to ensure success. For such he labours; and teaches to gather, in the gardens of others, those fruits of which their own sterile grounds are destitute; but so artfully to gather, that the public shall not perceive their depredations. He dignifies this fine art by the title of PLAGIANISM, and thus explains it:—

"The Plagianism of orators is the art, or an ingenious and easy mode, which some adroitly employ, to change, or disguise, all sorts of speeches of their own composition, or of that of other authors, for their pleasure, or their utility; in such a manner that it becomes impossible even for the author himself to recognise his own work,

his own genius, and his own style, so skilfully shall the whole be disguised."

Our professor proceeds to reveal the manner of managing the whole economy of the piece which is to be copied or disguised; and which consists in giving a new order to the parts, changing the phrases, the words, &c. An orator, for instance, having said that a plenipotentiary should possess three qualities, — *probity*, *capacity*, and *courage*; the plagiarist, on the contrary, may employ *courage*, *capacity*, and *probity*. This is only for a general rule, for it is too simple to practice frequently. To render the part perfect we must make it more complex, by changing the whole of the expressions. The plagiarist in place of *courage* will put *force*, *constancy*, or *vigour*. For *probity* he may say *religion*, *virtue*, or *sincerity*. Instead of *capacity*, he may substitute *erudition*, *ability*, or *science*. Or he may disguise the whole by saying, that the *plenipotentiary should be firm*, *virtuous*, and *able*.

The rest of this uncommon work is composed of passages extracted from celebrated writers, which are turned into the new manner of the plagiarist; their beauties, however, are never improved by their dress. Several celebrated writers when young, particularly the famous Flechier, who addressed verses to him, frequented the lectures of this professor!

Richesource became so zealous in this course of literature, that he published a volume, entitled, "The Art of Writing and Speaking; or, a Method of composing all sorts of Letters, and holding a polite Con-

versation." He concludes his preface by advertising his readers, that authors who may be in want of essays, sermons, letters of all kinds, written pleadings and verses, may be accommodated on application to him.

Our professor was extremely fond of copious title-pages, which I suppose to be very attractive to certain readers; for it is a custom which the Richesources of the day fail not to employ. Are there persons who value *books* by the length of their titles, as formerly the ability of a physician was judged by the size of his wig?

To this article may be added an account of another singular school, where the professor taught *obscurity* in literary composition!

I do not believe that those who are unintelligible are very intelligent. Quintilian has justly observed, that the obscurity of a writer is generally in proportion to his incapacity. However, as there is hardly a defect which does not find partisans, the same author informs us of a Rhetorician, who was so great an admirer of obscurity, that he always exhorted his scholars to preserve it; and made them correct, as blemishes, those passages of their works which appeared to him too intelligible. Quintilian adds, that the greatest panegyric they could give to a composition in that school was to declare, "I understand nothing of this piece." Lycophron possessed this taste, and he protested that he would hang himself if he found a person who should understand his poem, called the "Prophecy of Cassandra." He succeeded so well, that this piece has been

the stumbling-block of all the grammarians, scholiasts, and commentators; and remains inexplicable to the present day. Such works Charpentier admirably compares to those subterraneous places, where the air is so thick and suffocating that it extinguishes all torches. A most sophistical dilemma, on the subject of *obscurity*, was made by Thomas Anglus, or White, an English Catholic priest, the friend of Sir Kenelm Digby. This learned man frequently wandered in the mazes of metaphysical subtilties; and became perfectly unintelligible to his readers. When accused of this obscurity, he replied, "Either the learned understand me, or they do not. If they understand me, and find me in an error, it is easy for them to refute me; if they do not understand me, it is very unreasonable for them to exclaim against my doctrines."

This is saying all that the wit of man can suggest in favour of *obscurity!* Many, however, will agree with an observation made by Gravina on the over-refinement of modern composition, that "we do not think we have attained genius, till others must possess as much themselves to understand us." Fontenelle, in France, followed by Marivaux, Thomas, and others, first introduced that subtilised manner of writing, which tastes more natural and simple reject; one source of such bitter complaints of obscurity.

Pere Bouhours seriously asks if a German *can be a* bel esprit? This concise query was answered by Kramer, in a ponderous volume which bears for title, *Vindiciæ nominis Germanici.* This mode of refutation does not prove that the question was *then* so ridiculous as it was considered. The Germans of the present day, although greatly superior to their ancestors, there are who opine that they are still distant from that *acmé* of taste, which characterises the finished compositions of the French and the English authors. Nations display *genius* before they form *taste.*

It was the mode with English and French writers to dishonour the Germans with the epithets of heavy, dull and phlegmatic compilers, without taste, spirit, or genius: genuine descendants of the ancient Bœotians.

Crassoque sub aëre nati.

Many fanciful and many philosophical performances have lately shown that this censure has now become unjust; and much more forcibly answer the sarcastic question of Bouhours than the thick quarto of Kramer.

Churchill finely says of genius that it is independent of situation,

'And may hereafter even in Holland rise.'

Vondel, whom, as Marchand observes, the Dutch regard as their Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, had a strange defective taste; the poet himself knew none of these originals, but he wrote on some patriotic

subject, the sure way to obtain popularity: the greater part of his tragedies is drawn from the Scriptures; all badly chosen and unhappily executed. In his *Deliverance of the Children of Israel*, one of his principal characters is the *Divinity!* In his *Jerusalem Destroyed* we are disgusted with a tedious oration by the angel Gabriel, who proves theologically, and his proofs extend through nine closely printed pages in quarto, that this destruction had been predicted by the prophets: and in the *Lucifer* of the same author, the subject is grossly scandalised by this haughty spirit becoming stupidly in love with Eve, and it is for her he causes the rebellion of the evil angels, and the fall of our first parents. Poor Vondel kept a hosier's shop, which he left to the care of his wife, while he indulged his poetical genius. His stocking-shop failed, and his poems produced him more chagrin than glory; for in Holland, even a patriotic poet, if a bankrupt, would, no doubt, be accounted by his fellow-citizens as a madman. Vondel had no other master but his genius, which, with his uncongenial situation, occasioned all his errors.

Another Dutch poet is even less tolerable. Having written a long rhapsody concerning Pyramus and Thisbe, he concludes it by a ridiculous parallel between the death of these unfortunate victims of love, and the passion of Jesus Christ. He says:—

Om t'concluderem van onsen begrypt,
Dees Historie moraliserende,
Is in den verstande wel accorderende,
By der Passie van Christus gebenedyt.

And upon this, after having turned Pyramus into the Son of God, and Thisbe into the Christian soul, he proceeds with a number of comparisons; the latter always more impertinent than the former.

I believe it is well known that the actors on the Dutch theatre are generally tradesmen, who quit their aprons at the hour of public representation. This was the fact when I was in Holland more than forty years ago. Their comedies are offensive by the grossness of their buffooneries. One of their comic incidents was a miller appearing in distress for want of wind to turn his mill; he had recourse to the novel scheme of placing his back against it, and by certain imitative sounds behind the scenes, the mill is soon set a-going. It is hard to rival such a depravity of taste.

I saw two of their most celebrated tragedies. The one was Gysbert Van Amstel, by Vondel; that is Gysbrecht of Amsterdam, a warrior, who in the civil wars preserved this city by his heroism. It is a patriotic historical play, and never fails to crowd the theatre towards Christmas, when it is usually performed successively. One of the acts concludes with the scene of a convent; the sound of warlike instruments is heard; the abbey is stormed; the nuns and fathers are slaughtered; with the aid of 'blunderbuss and thunder,' every Dutchman appears sensible of the pathos of the poet. But it does not here conclude. After this terrible slaughter, the conquerors and the vanquished remain for *ten minutes* on the stage, silent and motionless, in the atti-

tudes in which the groups happened to fall! and this pantomimic pathos commands loud bursts of applause.

The other was the Ahasuerus of Schubart, or the Fall of Haman. In the triumphal entry the Batavian Mordecai was mounted on a genuine Flanders mare, that, fortunately, quietly received *her* applause with a lumpish majesty resembling her rider. I have seen an English ass once introduced on our stage which did not act with this decorum. Our late actors have frequently been beasts;—a Dutch taste!

Some few specimens of the best Dutch poetry which we have had, yield no evidence in favour of the national poetical taste. The Dutch poet Katz has a poem on the "Games of Children," where all the games are moralised; I suspect the taste of the poet as well as his subject is puerile. When a nation has produced no works above mediocrity, with them a certain mediocrity is excellence, and their master-pieces, with a people who have made a greater progress in refinement, can never be accepted as the works of a master.

THE PRODUCTIONS OF THE MIND NOT SEIZABLE BY CREDITORS.

When Crebillon, the French tragic poet, published his Catilina, it was attended with an honour to literature, which though it is probably forgotten, for it was only registered, I think, as the news of the day, it becomes one zealous in the cause of literature to preserve. I give the circumstance, the petition, and the decree.

At the time Catilina was given to the public, the creditors of the poet had the cruelty to attach the produce of this piece, as well at the bookseller's, who had printed the tragedy, as at the theatre where it was performed. The poet, irritated at these proceedings, addressed a petition to the king, in which he showed "that it was a thing yet unknown, that it should be allowed to class amongst seizable effects the productions of the human mind; that if such a practice was permitted, those who had consecrated their vigils to the studies of literature, and who had made the greatest efforts to render themselves, by this means, useful to their country, would see themselves placed in the cruel predicament of not venturing to publish works, often precious and interesting to the state; that the greater part of those who devote themselves to literature require for the first wants of life those aids which they have a right to expect from their labours; and that it never has been suffered in France to seize the fees of lawyers, and other persons of liberal professions."

In answer to this petition, a decree immediately issued from the King's council, commanding a replevy of the arrests and seizures of which the petitioner complained. This honourable decree was dated 21st May, 1749, and bore the following title: "Decree of the Council of his Majesty, in favour of M. Crebillon, author of the tragedy of Catilina, which declares that the productions of the mind are not amongst seizable effects."

Louis XV. exhibits the noble example of bestowing a mark of consideration to the remains of a man of

letters. This King not only testified his esteem of Crebillon by having his works printed at the Louvre, but also by consecrating to his glory a tomb of marble.

CRITICS.

Writers who have been unsuccessful in original composition have their other productions immediately decried, whatever merit they might once have been allowed to possess. Yet this is very unjust; an author who has given a wrong direction to his literary powers may perceive at length where he can more securely point them. Experience is as excellent a mistress in the school of literature as in the school of human life. Blackmore's epics are insufferable; yet neither Addison nor Johnson erred when they considered his philosophical poem as a valuable composition. An indifferent poet may exert the art of criticism in a very high degree; and if he cannot himself produce an original work, he may yet be of great service in regulating the happier genius of another. This observation I shall illustrate by the characters of two French critics; the one is the Abbé d'Aubignac, and the other Chapelain.

Boileau opens his Art of Poetry by a precept which though it be common is always important; this critical poet declares, that "It is in vain a daring author thinks of attaining to the height of Parnassus if he does not feel the secret influence of heaven, and if his natal star has not formed him to be a poet." This observation he founded on the character of our Abbé; who had excel-

lently written on the economy of dramatic composition. His *Pratique du Théâtre* gained him an extensive reputation. When he produced a tragedy, the world expected a finished piece; it was acted, and reprobated. The author, however, did not acutely feel its bad reception; he every where boasted that he, of all the dramatists, had most scrupulously observed the *rules* of Aristotle. The Prince de Guemené, famous for his repartees, sarcastically observed, "I do not quarrel with the Abbé d'Aubignac for having so closely followed the precepts of Aristotle; but I cannot pardon the precepts of Aristotle, that occasioned the Abbé d'Aubignac to write so wretched a tragedy."

The *Pratique du Théâtre* is not, however, to be despised, because the *Tragedy* of its author is despicable.

Chapelain's unfortunate epic has rendered him notorious. He had gained, and not undeservedly, great reputation for his critical powers. After a retention of above thirty years, his *Pucelle* appeared. He immediately became the butt of every unfledged wit, and his former works were eternally condemned; insomuch that when Camusat published, after the death of our author, a little volume of extracts from his manuscript letters, it is curious to observe the awkward situation in which he finds himself. In his preface he seems afraid that the very name of Chapelain will be sufficient to repel the reader.

Camusat observes of Chapelain, that "he found flatterers who assured him his *Pucelle* ranked above the Æneid; and this Chapelain but feebly denied. However

this may be, it would be difficult to make the bad taste which reigns throughout this poem agree with that sound and exact criticism with which he decided on the works of others. So true is it, that *genius* is very superior to a justness of mind which is *sufficient to judge* and to advise others." Chapelain was ordered to draw up a critical list of the chief living authors and men of letters in France, for the king. It is extremely impartial, and performed with an analytical skill of their literary characters which could not have been surpassed by an Aristotle or a Boileau.

The *talent of judging* may exist separately from the *power of execution*. An amateur may not be an artist, though an artist should be an amateur; and it is for this reason that young authors are not to contemn the precepts of such critics as even the Abbé d'Aubignac and Chapelain. It is to Walsh, a miserable versifier, that Pope stands indebted for the hint of our poetry then being deficient in correctness and polish; and it is from this fortunate hint that Pope derived his poetical excellence. Dionysius Halicarnassensis has composed a lifeless history; yet, as Gibbon observes, how admirably has *he* judged the masters, and defined the rules of historical composition! Gravina, with great taste and spirit, has written on poetry and poets, but he composed tragedies which give him no title to be ranked among them.

ANECDOTES OF AUTHORS CENSURED.

It is an ingenious observation made by a journalist of Trevoux, on perusing a criticism not ill-written, which pretended to detect several faults in the compositions of Bruyère, that in ancient Rome the great men who triumphed amidst the applauses of those who celebrated their virtues, were at the same time compelled to listen to those who reproached them with their vices. This custom is not less necessary to the republic of letters than it was formerly to the republic of Rome. Without this it is probable that authors would be intoxicated with success, and would then relax in their accustomed vigour; and the multitude who took them for models would, for want of judgment, imitate their defects.

Sterne and Churchill were continually abusing the Reviewers, because they honestly told the one that obscenity was not wit, and obscurity was not sense; and the other that dissonance in poetry did not excel harmony, and that his rhymes were frequently prose lines of ten syllables cut into verse. They applauded their happier efforts. Notwithstanding all this, it is certain that so little discernment exists among common writers and common readers, that the obscenity and flippancy of Sterne, and the bald verse and prosaic poetry of Churchill, were precisely the portion which they selected for imitation. The blemishes of great men are not the less blemishes, but they are, unfortunately, the easiest parts for imitation.

Yet criticism may be too rigorous, and genius too sensible to its fairest attacks. Racine acknowledged that one of the severe criticisms he received had occasioned him more vexation than the greatest applauses had afforded him pleasure. Sir John Marsham, having published the first part of his "Chronology," suffered so much chagrin at the endless controversies which it raised—and some of his critics went so far as to affirm it was designed to be detrimental to revelation—that he burned the second part, which was ready for the press. Pope was observed to writhe with anguish in his chair on hearing mentioned the letter of Cibber, with other temporary attacks; and it is said of Montesquieu, that he was so much affected by the criticisms, true and false, which he daily experienced, that they contributed to hasten his death. Ritson's extreme irritability closed in lunacy, while ignorant Reviewers, in the shapes of assassins, were haunting his death-bed. In the preface to his "Metrical Romances," he says—"Brought to an end in ill health and low spirits—certain to be insulted by a base and prostitute gang of lurking assassins who stab in the dark, and whose poisoned daggers he has already experienced." Scott, of Amwell, never recovered from a ludicrous criticism, which I discovered had been written by a physician who never pretended to poetical taste.

Pelisson has recorded a literary anecdote, which forcibly shows the danger of caustic criticism. A young man from a remote province came to Paris with a play, which he considered as a masterpiece. M. L'Etoille

was more than just in his merciless criticism. He showed the youthful bard a thousand glaring defects in his chef d'œuvre. The humbled country author burnt his tragedy, returned home, took to his chamber, and died of vexation and grief. Of all unfortunate men, one of the unhappiest is a middling author endowed with too lively a sensibility for criticism. Athenæus, in his tenth book, has given us a lively portrait of this melancholy being. Anaxandrides appeared one day on horseback in the public assembly at Athens, to recite a dithyrambic poem, of which he read a portion. He was a man of fine stature, and wore a purple robe edged with golden fringe. But his complexion was saturnine and melancholy, which was the cause that he never spared his own writings. Whenever he was vanquished by a rival, he immediately gave his compositions to the druggists to be cut into pieces to wrap their articles in, without ever caring to revise his writings. It is owing to this that he destroyed a number of pleasing compositions; age increased his sourness, and every day he became more and more dissatisfied at the awards of his auditors. Hence his "Tereus," because it failed to obtain the prize, has not reached us, which, with other of his productions, deserved preservation, though they had missed the crown awarded by the public.

Batteux having been chosen by the French government for the compilation of elementary books for the Military School, is said to have felt their unfavourable reception so acutely, that he became a prey to excessive grief. The lamentable death of Dr. Hawkesworth was

occasioned by a similar circumstance. Government had consigned to his care the compilation of the voyages that pass under his name: how he succeeded is well known. He felt the public reception so sensibly, that he preferred the oblivion of death to the mortifying recollections of life.

On this interesting subject Fontenelle, in his "Eloge on Newton," has made the following observation:— "Newton was more desirous of remaining unknown than of having the calm of life disturbed by those literary storms which genius and science attract about those who rise to eminence." In one of his letters we learn that his "Treatise on Optics" being ready for the press, several premature objections which appeared made him abandon its publication. "I should reproach myself," he said, "for my imprudence, if I were to lose a thing so real as my ease to run after a shadow." But this shadow he did not miss: it did not cost him the ease he so much loved, and it had for him as much reality as ease itself. I refer to Bayle, in his curious article "Hipponax," note F. To these instances we may add the fate of the Abbé Cassagne, a man of learning, and not destitute of talents. He was intended for one of the preachers at court; but he had hardly made himself known in the pulpit, when he was struck by the lightning of Boileau's muse. He felt so acutely the caustic verses, that they rendered him almost incapable of literary exertion; in the prime of life he became melancholy, and shortly afterwards died insane. A modern painter, it is known, never recovered from the

biting ridicule of a popular, but malignant wit. Cummyns, a celebrated quaker, confessed he died of an anonymous letter in a public paper, which, said he, "fastened on my heart, and threw me into this slow fever." Racine, who died of his extreme sensibility to a royal rebuke, confessed that the pain which one severe criticism inflicted outweighed all the applause he could receive. The feathered arrow of an epigram has sometimes been wet with the heart's blood of its victim. Fortune has been lost, reputation destroyed, and every charity of life extinguished, by the inhumanity of inconsiderate wit.

Literary history records the fate of several who may be said to have *died of Criticism*. But there is more sense and infinite humour in the mode which Phædrus adopted to answer the cavillers of his age. When he first published his Fables, the taste for conciseness and simplicity was so much on the decline, that they were both objected to him as faults. He used his critics as they deserved. To those who objected against the *conciseness* of his style, he tells a long *tedious story* (Lib. iii. Fab. 10, ver. 59), and treats those who condemned the *simplicity* of his style with a run of *bombast verses*, that have a great many noisy elevated words in them, without any sense at the bottom—this in Lib. iv. Fab. 6.

VIRGINITY.

The writings of the Fathers once formed the studies of the learned. These labours abound with that subtilty

of argument which will repay the industry of the inquisitive, and the antiquary may turn them over for pictures of the manners of the age. A favourite subject with Saint Ambrose was that of Virginity, on which he has several works; and perhaps he wished to revive the order of the vestals of ancient Rome, which afterwards produced the institution of Nuns. His "Treatise on Virgins" is in three volumes. We learn from this work of the fourth century the lively impressions his exhortations had made on the minds and hearts of girls, not less in the most distant provinces, than in the neighbourhood of Milan where he resided. The virgins of Bologna, amounting only, it appears, to the number of twenty, performed all kinds of needle-work, not merely to gain their livelihood, but also to be enabled to perform acts of liberality, and exerted their industry to allure other girls to join the holy profession of VIRGINITY. He exhorts daughters, in spite of their parents, and even their lovers, to consecrate themselves. "I do not blame marriage," he says, "I only show the advantages of VIRGINITY."

He composed this book in so florid a style, that he considered it required some apology. A Religious of the Benedictines published a translation in 1689.

So sensible was Saint Ambrose of the *rarity* of the profession he would establish, that he thus combats his adversaries: "They complain that human nature will be exhausted; but I ask, who has ever sought to marry without finding women enough from amongst whom he might choose? What murder, or what war, has ever

been occasioned for a virgin? It is one of the consequences of marriage to kill the adulterer, and to war with the ravisher."

He wrote another treatise *On the perpetual Virginity of the Mother of God.* He attacks Bonosius on this subject, and defends her virginity, which was indeed greatly suspected by Bonosius, who, however, got nothing by this bold suspicion but the dreadful name of *Heretic.* A third treatise was entitled *Exhortation to Virginity;* a fourth, *On the Fate of a Virgin,* is more curious. He relates the misfortunes of one *Susannah,* who was by no means a companion for her namesake; for having made a vow of virginity, and taken the veil, she afterwards endeavoured to conceal her shame, but the precaution only tended to render her more culpable. Her behaviour, indeed, had long afforded ample food for the sarcasms of the Jews and Pagans. Saint Ambrose compelled her to perform public penance, and after having declaimed on her double crime, gave her hopes of pardon, if, like "Sœur Jeanne," this early nun would sincerely repent: to complete her chastisement, he ordered her every day to recite the fiftieth psalm.

A GLANCE INTO THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

In the republic of letters the establishment of an academy has been a favourite project; yet perhaps it is little more than an Utopian scheme. The united efforts of men of letters in Academies have produced little. It would seem that no man likes to bestow his

great labours on a small community, for whose members he himself does not feel, probably, the most flattering partiality. The French Academy made a splendid appearance in Europe; yet when this society published their Dictionary, that of Furetière's became a formidable rival; and Johnson did as much as the *forty* themselves. Voltaire confesses that the great characters of the literary republic were formed without the aid of academies.—"For what then," he asks, "are they necessary?—To preserve and nourish the fire which great geniuses have kindled." By observing the *Junto* at their meetings we may form some opinion of the indolent manner in which they trifled away their time. We are fortunately enabled to do this, by a letter in which Patru describes, in a very amusing manner, the visit which Christina of Sweden took a sudden fancy to pay to the academy.

The Queen of Sweden having resolved to visit the French Academy, gave so short a notice of her design, that it was impossible to inform the majority of the members of her intention. About four o'clock fifteen or sixteen academicians were assembled. M. Gombaut, one of the members who did not know of the intended royal visit, and who had never forgiven her majesty because she did not relish his verses, thought proper to show his resentment by quitting the assembly.

She was received in a spacious hall. In the middle was a table covered with rich blue velvet, ornamented with a broad border of gold and silver. At its head was placed an arm-chair of black velvet embroidered with

gold, and round the table were placed chairs with tapestry backs. The chancellor had forgotten to hang in the hall the portrait of the queen, which she had presented to the Academy, and which was considered as a great omission. About five, a footman belonging to the queen inquired if the company were assembled. Soon after, a servant of the king informed the chancellor that the queen was at the end of the street; and immediately her carriage drew up in the court-yard. The chancellor, followed by the rest of the members, went to receive her as she stepped out of her chariot; but the crowd was so great, that few of them could reach her majesty. Accompanied by the chancellor, she passed through the first hall, followed by one of her ladies, the captain of her guards, and one or two of her suite.

When she entered the Academy she approached the fire, and spoke in a low voice to the chancellor. She then asked why M. Menage was not there? and when she was told that he did not belong to the Academy, she asked why he did not? She was answered, that however he might merit the honour, he had rendered himself unworthy of it by several disputes he had had with its members. She then inquired aside of the chancellor whether the academicians were to sit or stand before her? On this the chancellor consulted with a member, who observed that in the time of Ronsard, there was held an assembly of men of letters before Charles IX. several times, and that they were always seated. The queen conversed with M. Bourdelot; and suddenly turning to Madame de Bregis, told her that

she believed she must not be present at the assembly; but it was agreed that this lady deserved the honour. As the queen was talking with a member she abruptly quitted him, as was her custom, and in her quick way sat down in the arm-chair; and at the same time the members seated themselves. The queen observing that they did not, out of respect to her, approach the table, desired them to come near; and they accordingly approached it.

During these ceremonious preparations several officers of state had entered the hall, and stood behind the academicians. The chancellor sat at the queen's left hand by the fire-side; and at the right was placed M. de la Chambre, the director; then Boisrobert, Patru, Pelisson, Cotin, the Abbé Tallemant, and others. M. de Mezeray sat at the bottom of the table facing the queen, with an inkstand, paper, and the portfolio of the company lying before him: he occupied the place of secretary. When they were all seated the director rose, and the academicians followed him, all but the chancellor, who remained in his seat. The director made his complimentary address in a low voice, his body was quite bent, and no person but the queen and the chancellor could hear him. She received his address with great satisfaction.

All compliments concluded, they returned to their seats. The director then told the queen that he had composed a treatise on Pain, to add to his character of the Passions, and if it was agreeable to her majesty, he would read the first chapter.—Very willingly, she

answered. Having read it, he said to her majesty, that he would read no more lest he should fatigue her. Not at all, she replied, for I suppose what follows resembles what I have heard.

Afterwards M. Mezeray mentioned that M. Cotin had some verses, which her majesty would doubtless find beautiful, and if it was agreeable they should be read. M. Cotin read them: they were versions of two passages from Lucretius: the one in which he attacks a Providence, and the other, where he gives the origin of the world according to the Epicurean system: to these he added twenty lines of his own, in which he maintained the existence of a Providence. This done, an abbé rose, and, without being desired or ordered, read two sonnets, which by courtesy were allowed to be tolerable. It is remarkable that both the *poets* read their verses standing, while the rest read their compositions seated.

After these readings, the director informed the queen that the ordinary exercise of the company was to labour on the dictionary; and that if her majesty should not find it disagreeable, they would read a *cahier* or stitched MS. Very willingly, she answered. M. de Mezeray then read what related to the word *Jeu; Game.* Amongst other proverbial expressions was this: *Game of Princes, which only pleases the player,* to express a malicious violence committed by one in power. At this the queen laughed heartily; and they continued reading all that was fairly written. This lasted about an hour, when the queen observing that nothing more

remained, arose, made a bow to the company, and returned in the manner she entered.

Furetière, who was himself an academician, has described the miserable manner in which time was consumed at their assemblies. I confess he was a satirist, and had quarrelled with the academy; there must have been, notwithstanding, sufficient resemblance for the following picture, however it may be overcharged. He has been blamed for thus exposing the Eleusinian mysteries of literature to the uninitiated.

"He who is most clamorous, is he whom they suppose has most reason. They all have the art of making long orations upon a trifle. The second repeats like an echo what the first said; but generally three or four speak together. When there is a bench of five or six members, one reads, another decides, two converse, one sleeps, and another amuses himself with reading some dictionary which happens to lie before him. When a second member is to deliver his opinion, they are obliged to read again the article, which at the first perusal he had been too much engaged to hear. This is a happy manner of finishing their work. They can hardly get over two lines without long digressions; without some one telling a pleasant story, or the news of the day; or talking of affairs of state, and reforming the government."

That the French Academy were generally frivolously employed appears also from an epistle to Balzac, by Boisrobert, the amusing companion of Cardinal Richelieu. "Every one separately," says he, "promises

great things; when they meet they do nothing. They have been *six years* employed on the letter F; and I should be happy if I were certain of living till they got through G."

The following anecdote concerns the *forty arm-chairs* of the academicians. Those cardinals who were academicians for a long time had not attended the meetings of the academy, because they thought that *arm-chairs* were indispensable to their dignity, and the academy had then only common chairs. These cardinals were desirous of being present at the election of M. Monnoie, that they might give him a distinguished mark of their esteem. "The king," says D'Alembert, "to satisfy at once the delicacy of their friendship, and that of their cardinalship, and to preserve at the same time that academical equality, of which this enlightened monarch (Louis XIV.) well knew the advantage, sent to the academy forty arm-chairs for the forty academicians, the same chairs which we now occupy; and the motive to which we owe them is sufficient to render the memory of Louis XIV. precious to the republic of letters, to whom it owes so many more important obligations!"

POETICAL AND GRAMMATICAL DEATHS.

It will appear by the following anecdotes, that some men may be said to have died *poetically* and even *grammatically*.

There must be some attraction existing in poetry which is not merely fictitious, for often have its genuine

votaries felt all its powers on the most trying occasions. They have displayed the energy of their mind by composing or repeating verses, even with death on their lips.

The Emperor Adrian, dying, made that celebrated address to his soul, which is so happily translated by Pope. Lucan, when he had his veins opened by order of Nero, expired reciting a passage from his Pharsalia, in which he had described the wound of a dying soldier. Petronius did the same thing on the same occasion.

Patris, a poet of Caen, perceiving himself expiring, composed some verses which are justly admired. In this little poem he relates a dream, in which he appeared to be placed next to a beggar, when, having addressed him in the haughty strain he would probably have employed on this side of the grave, he receives the following reprimand:—

Ici tous sont égaux ; je ne te dois plus rien ;
Je suis sur mon fumier comme toi sur le tien.

Here all are equal! now thy lot is mine!
I on my dunghill, as thou art on thine.

Des Barreaux, it is said, wrote on his death-bed that well-known sonnet which is translated in the "Spectator."

Margaret of Austria, when she was nearly perishing in a storm at sea, composed her epitaph in verse. Had she perished, what would have become of the epitaph? And if she escaped, of what use was it? She should rather have said her prayers. The verses however have all the *naïveté* of the times. They are—

Cy gist Margot, la gente demoiselle,
Qu'eut deux maris, et si mourut pucelle.

Beneath this tomb is high-born Margaret laid,
Who had two husbands, and yet died a maid.

She was betrothed to Charles VIII. of France, who forsook her; and being next intended for the Spanish infant, in her voyage to Spain, she wrote these lines in a storm.

Mademoiselle de Serment was surnamed the philosopher. She was celebrated for her knowledge and taste in polite literature. She died of a cancer in her breast, and suffered her misfortune with exemplary patience. She expired in finishing these verses, which she addressed to Death:—

Nectare clausa suo,
Dignum tantorum pretium tulit illa laborum.

It was after Cervantes had received extreme unction that he wrote the dedication of his Persiles.

Roscommon, at the moment he expired, with an energy of voice that expressed the most fervent devotion, uttered two lines of his own version of "Dies Iræ!" Waller, in his last moments, repeated some lines from Virgil: and Chaucer seems to have taken his farewell of all human vanities by a moral ode, entitled "A balade made by Geffrey Chaucyer upon his dethe-bedde lying in his grete anguysse."

Cornelius de Witt fell an innocent victim to popular prejudice. His death is thus noticed by Hume:—"This man, who has bravely served his country in war, and who had been invested with the highest dignities, was delivered into the hands of the executioner, and torn in

pieces by the most inhuman torments. Amidst the severe agonies which he endured he frequently repeated an ode of Horace, which contained sentiments suited to his deplorable condition." It was the third ode of the third book which this illustrious philosopher and statesman then repeated.

Metastasio, after receiving the sacrament, a very short time before his last moments, broke out with all the enthusiasm of poetry and religion in these stanzas:

T'offro il tuo proprio Figlio,
Che già d'amore in pegno,
Racchiuso in picciol segno
Si volle a noi donar.

A lui rivolgi il ciglio.
Guardo chi t'offro, e poi
Lasci, Signor, se vuoi,
Lascia di perdonar.

"I offer to thee, O Lord, thy own Son, who already has given the pledge of love, enclosed in this thin emblem. Turn on him thine eyes: ah! behold whom I offer to thee, and then desist, O Lord! if thou canst desist from mercy."

"The muse that has attended my course," says the dying Gleim in a letter to Klopstock, "still hovers round my steps to the very verge of the grave." A collection of lyrical poems, entitled "Last Hours," composed by Old Gleim on his death-bed, was intended to be published. The death of Klopstock was one of the most poetical: in this poet's "Messiah," he had made the death of Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, a picture of the death of the Just; and on his own death-bed he was heard repeating, with an expiring voice, his

own verses on Mary; he was exhorting himself to die by the accents of his own harp, the sublimities of his own muse! The same song of Mary was read at the public funeral of Klopstock.

Chatellard, a French gentleman, beheaded in Scotland for having loved the queen, and even for having attempted her honour, Brantome says, would not have any other viaticum than a poem of Ronsard. When he ascended the scaffold he took the hymns of this poet, and for his consolation read that on death, which our old critic says is well adapted to conquer its fear.

When the Marquis of Montrose was condemned by his judges to have his limbs nailed to the gates of four cities, the brave soldier said that "he was sorry he had not limbs sufficient to be nailed to all the gates of the cities in Europe, as monuments of his loyalty." As he proceeded to his execution, he put this thought into verse.

Philip Strozzi, imprisoned by Cosmo the First, Great Duke of Tuscany, was apprehensive of the danger to which he might expose his friends who had joined in his conspiracy against the duke, from the confessions which the rack might extort from him. Having attempted every exertion for the liberty of his country, he considered it as no crime therefore to die. He resolved on suicide. With the point of the sword, with which he killed himself, he cut out on the mantel-piece of the chimney this verse of Virgil:—

> Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor.
> Rise, some avenger, from our blood!

I can never repeat without a strong emotion the following stanzas, begun by André Chenier, in the dreadful period of the French revolution. He was waiting for his turn to be dragged to the guillotine, when he commenced this poem :—

Comme un dernier rayon, comme un dernier zephyre
Anime la fin d'un beau jour;
Au pied de l'echafaud j'essaie encore ma lyre,
Peut-être est ce bientot mon tour;

Peut-être avant que l'heure en cercle promenée
Ait posé sur l'email brillant
Dans les soixante pas ou sa route est bornée
Son pied sonore et vigilant.

Le sommeil du tombeau pressera ma paupière——

Here, at this pathetic line, was André Chenier summoned to the guillotine ! Never was a more beautiful effusion of grief interrupted by a more affecting incident !

Several men of science have died in a scientific manner. Haller, the poet, philosopher, and physician, beheld his end approach with the utmost composure. He kept feeling his pulse to the last moment, and when he found that life was almost gone, he turned to his brother physician, observing, "My friend, the artery ceases to beat," and almost instantly expired. The same remarkable circumstance had occurred to the great Harvey : he kept making observations on the state of his pulse, when life was drawing to its close, "as if," says Dr. Wilson, in the oration spoken a few days after the event, "that he who had taught us the beginning

of life might himself, at his departing from it, become acquainted with those of death."

De Lagny, who was intended by his friends for the study of the law, having fallen on an Euclid, found it so congenial to his dispositions, that he devoted himself to mathematics. In his last moments, when he retained no further recollection of the friends who surrounded his bed, one of them, perhaps to make a philosophical experiment, thought proper to ask him the square of twelve: our dying mathematician instantly, and perhaps without knowing that he answered, replied "One hundred and forty-four."

The following anecdotes are of a different complexion, and may excite a smile.

Père Bouhours was a French grammarian, who had been justly accused of paying too scrupulous an attention to the minutiæ of letters. He was more solicitous of his *words* than his *thoughts*. It is said, that when he was dying, he called out to his friends (a correct grammarian to the last), "*Je* VAS, *ou je* VAIS *mourir; l'un ou l'autre se dit!*"

When Malherbe was dying, he reprimanded his nurse for making use of a solecism in her language! and when his confessor represented to him the felicities of a future state in low and trite expressions, the dying critic interrupted him:—"Hold your tongue," he said; "your wretched style only makes me out of conceit with them!"

The favourite studies and amusements of the learned La Mothe le Vayer consisted in accounts of the most

distant countries. He gave a striking proof of the influence of this master-passion, when death hung upon his lips. Bernier, the celebrated traveller, entering and drawing the curtains of his bed to take his eternal farewell, the dying man turning to him, with a faint voice inquired, "Well, my friend, what news from the Great Mogul?"

SCARRON.

Scarron, as a burlesque poet, but no other comparison exists, had his merit, but is now little read; for the uniformity of the burlesque style is as intolerable as the uniformity of the serious. From various sources we may collect some uncommon anecdotes, although he was a mere author.

His father, a counsellor, having married a second wife, the lively Scarron became the object of her hatred. Hestudied, and travelled, and took the clerical tonsure; but discovered dispositions more suitable to the pleasures of his age than to the gravity of his profession. He formed an acquaintance with the wits of the times; and in the carnival of 1638 committed a youthful extravagance, for which his remaining days formed a continual punishment. He disguised himself as a savage; the singularity of a naked man attracted crowds. After having been hunted by the mob, he was forced to escape from his pursuers, and concealed himself in a marsh. A freezing cold seized him, and threw him, at the age of twenty-seven years, into a kind of

palsy; a cruel disorder which tormented him all his life. "It was thus," he says, "that pleasure deprived me suddenly of legs which had danced with elegance, and of hands, which could manage the pencil and the lute."

Goujet, without stating this anecdote, describes his disorder as an acrid humour, distilling itself on his nerves, and baffling the skill of his physicians; the sciatica, rheumatism, in a word, a complication of maladies attacked him, sometimes successively, sometimes together, and made of our poor Abbé a sad spectacle. He thus describes himself in one of his letters; and who could be in better humour?

"I have lived to thirty: if I reach forty, I shall only add many miseries to those which I have endured these last eight or nine years. My person was well made, though short; my disorder has shortened it still more by a foot. My head is a little broad for my shape; my face is full enough for my body to appear very meagre; I have hair enough to render a wig unnecessary; I have got many white hairs, in spite of the proverb. My teeth, formerly square pearls, are now of the colour of wood, and will soon be of slate. My legs and thighs first formed an obtuse angle, afterwards an equilateral angle, and at length, an acute one. My thighs and body form another; and my head, always dropping on my breast, makes me not ill represent a Z. I have got my arms shortened as well as my legs, and my fingers as well as my arms. In a word, I am an abridgment of human miseries."

He had the free use of nothing but his tongue and his hands; and he wrote on a portfolio placed on his knees.

Belzac said of Scarron, that he had gone further in insensibility than the stoics, who were satisfied in appearing insensible to pain; but Scarron was gay, and amused all the world with his sufferings.

He pourtrays himself thus humorously in his address to the queen :—

Je ne regarde plus qu'en bas,
Je suis torticolis, j'ai la tête penchante;
Ma mine devient si plaisante.
Que quand on en riroit, je ne m'en plaindrois pas.

"I can only see under me; I am wry-necked; my head hangs down; my appearance is so droll, that if people laugh, I shall not complain."

He says elsewhere,

Parmi les torticolis
Je passe pour des plus jolis.

"Among your wry-necked people I pass for one of the handsomest."

After having suffered this distortion of shape, and these acute pains for four years, he quitted his usual residence, the quarter du Marais, for the baths of the fauxbourg Saint Germain. He took leave of his friends, by addressing some verses to them, entitled, *Adieux aux Marais;* in which he describes several celebrated persons. When he was brought into the street in a chair, the pleasure of seeing himself there once more overcame the pains which the motion occasioned, and

he has celebrated the transport by an ode, which has for title, "The Way from le Marais to the Fauxbourg Saint Germain."

The baths he tried had no effect on his miserable disorder. But a new affliction was added to the catalogue of his griefs.

His father, who had hitherto contributed to his necessities, having joined a party against Cardinal Richelieu, was exiled. This affair was rendered still more unfortunate by his mother-in-law with her children at Paris, in the absence of her husband, appropriating the property of the family to her own use.

Hitherto Scarron had had no connexion with Cardinal Richelieu. The conduct of his father had even rendered his name disagreeable to the minister, who was by no means prone to forgiveness. Scarron, however, when he thought his passion moderated, ventured to present a petition, which is considered by the critics as one of his happiest productions. Richelieu permitted it to be read to him, and acknowledged that it afforded him much pleasure, and that it was *pleasantly dated*. This *pleasant date* is thus given by Scarron:—

Fait à Paris dernier jour d'Octobre,
Par moi, Scarron, qui malgré mois suis sobre,
L'an que l'on prit le fameux Perpignan,
Et, sans canon, la ville de Sedan.

At Paris done, the last day of October,
By me, Scarron, who wanting wine, am sober,
The year they took fam'd Perpignan,
And, without cannon-ball, Sedan.

This was flattering the minister adroitly in two points very agreeable to him. The poet augured well of the dispositions of the cardinal, and lost no time to return to the charge, by addressing an ode to him, to which he gave the title of THANKS, as if he had already received the favours which he hoped he should receive! But all was lost by the death of the cardinal. Catherine of Medicis was prodigal of her *promises*, and for this reason, Ronsard dedicated to her the hymn to PROMISE.

When Scarron's father died, he brought his mother-in-law into court; and, to complete his misfortunes, lost his suit. The cases which he drew up for the occasion were so extremely burlesque, that the world could not easily conceive how a man could amuse himself so pleasantly on a subject on which his existence depended.

The successor of Richelieu, the Cardinal Mazarin, was insensible to his applications. He did nothing for him, although the poet dedicated to him his *Typhon*, a burlesque poem, in which the author describes the wars of the giants with the gods. Our bard was so irritated at this neglect, that he suppressed a sonnet he had written in his favour, and aimed at him several satirical bullets. Scarron, however, consoled himself for this kind of disgrace with those select friends who were not inconstant in their visits to him. The Bishop of Mans also, solicited by a friend, gave him a living in his diocese. When Scarron had taken possession of it, he began his *Roman Comique*, ill translated into English by *Comical Romance*. He made friends by his dedications. Such resources were indeed necessary, for he

not only lived well, but had made his house an asylum for his two sisters, who there found refuge from an unfeeling step-mother.

It was about this time that the beautiful and accomplished Mademoiselle d'Aubigné, afterwards so well known by the name of Madame de Maintenon, she who was to be one day the mistress, if not the queen of France, formed with Scarron the most romantic connexion. She united herself in marriage with one whom she well knew could only be a lover. It was indeed amidst that literary society she formed her taste and embellished with her presence his little residence, where assembled the most polished courtiers and some of the finest geniuses of Paris of that famous party, called *La Fronde*, formed against Mazarin. Such was the influence this marriage had over Scarron, that after this period his writings became more correct and more agreeable than those which he had previously composed. Scarron, on his side, gave a proof of his attachment to Madame de Maintenon; for by marrying her he lost his living of Mans. But though without wealth, he was accustomed to say that "his wife and he would not live uncomfortably by the produce of his estate and the *Marquisate of Quinet*." Thus he called the revenue which his compositions produced, and *Quinet* was his bookseller.

Scarron addressed one of his dedications to his dog, to ridicule those writers who dedicate their works indiscriminately, though no author has been more liberal of dedications than himself; but, as he confessed, he made

dedication a kind of business. When he was low in cash he always dedicated to some lord, whom he praised as warmly as his dog, but whom probably he did not esteem as much.

When Scarron was visited, previous to general conversation his friends were taxed with a perusal of what he had written since he saw them last. Segrais and a friend calling on him, "Take a chair," said our author, "and let me *try on you* my 'Roman Comique.'" He took his manuscript, read several pages, and when he observed that they laughed, he said, "Good, this goes well; my book can't fail of success, since it obliges such able persons as yourselves to laugh;" and then remained silent to receive their compliments. He used to call this *trying on his romance*, as a tailor *tries* his *coat*. He was agreeable and diverting in all things, even in his complaints and passions. Whatever he conceived he immediately too freely expressed; but his amiable lady corrected him of this in three months after marriage.

He petitioned the queen, in his droll manner, to be permitted the honour of being her *Sick-Man by right of office*. These verses form a part of his address to her majesty:

Scarron, par le grace de Dieu,
Malade indigne de la reine,
Homme n'ayant ni feu, ni lieu,
Mais bien du mal et de la peine;
Hopital allant et venant,
Des jambes d'autrui cheminant,

Des siennes n'ayant plus l'usage,
Souffrant beaucoup, dormant bien peu,
Et pourtant faisant par courage
Bonne mine et fort mauvais jeu.

"Scarron, by the grace of God, the unworthy Sick-Man of the Queen; a man without a house, though a moving hospital of disorders; walking only with other people's legs, with great sufferings, but little sleep; and yet, in spite of all, very courageously showing a hearty countenance, though indeed he plays a losing game."

She smiled, granted the title, and, what was better, added a small pension, which losing, by lampooning the minister, Mazarin, Fouquet generously granted him a more considerable one.

The termination of the miseries of this facetious genius was now approaching. To one of his friends, who was taking leave of him for some time, Scarron said, "I shall soon die; the only regret I have in dying is not to be enabled to leave some property to my wife, who is possessed of infinite merit, and whom I have every reason imaginable to admire and to praise."

One day he was seized with so violent a fit of the hiccough, that his friends now considered his prediction would soon be verified. When it was over, "if ever I recover," cried Scarron, "I will write a bitter satire against the hiccough." The satire, however, was never written, for he died soon after. A little before his death, when he observed his relations and domestics weeping and groaning, he was not much affected, but humorously told them, "My children, you will never

weep for me so much as I have made you laugh." A few moments before he died, he said, that "he never thought it was so easy a matter to laugh at the approach of death."

The burlesque compositions of Scarron are now neglected by the French. This species of writing was much in vogue till attacked by the critical Boileau, who annihilated such puny writers as D'Assoucy and Dulot, with their stupid admirers. It is said he spared Scarron because his merit, though it appeared but at intervals, was uncommon. Yet so much were burlesque verses the fashion after Scarron's works, that the booksellers would not publish poems, but with the word "Burlesque" in the title-page. In 1649 appeared a poem, which shocked the pious, entitled "The Passion of our Lord, in *burlesque Verses*."

Swift, in his dotage, appears to have been gratified by such puerilities as Scarron frequently wrote. An ode which Swift calls "A Lilliputian Ode," consisting of verses of three syllables, probably originated in a long epistle in verses of three syllables, which Scarron addressed to Sarrazin. It is pleasant, and the following lines will serve as a specimen:—

Epitre à M. Sarrazin.

Sarrazin
Mon voisin,
Cher ami,
Qu'a demi,
Je ne voi,
Dont ma foi

J'ai depit
Un petit.
N'est-tu pas
Barrabas,
Busiris,
Phalaris,
Ganelon,
Le Felon?

He describes himself—

Un pauvret,
Très maigret,
Au col tors,
Dont le corps
Tout tortu,
Tout bossu.
Suranné,
Decharné,
Est reduit,
Jour et nuit,
A souffrir
Sans guerir
Des tourmens
Vehemens.

He complains of Sarrazin's not visiting him, threatens to reduce him into powder if he comes not quickly; and concludes,

Mais pourtant
Repentant
Si tu viens
Et te tiens
Seulement
Un moment

Avec nous
Mon courroux
Finira,
Et Cætera.

The Roman Comique of our author abounds with pleasantry, with wit and character. His "Virgile Travestie" it is impossible to read long: this we likewise feel in "Cotton's Virgil travestied," which has notwithstanding considerable merit. Buffoonery after a certain time exhausts our patience. It is the chaste actor only who can keep the attention awake for a length of time. It is said that Scarron intended to write a tragedy; this perhaps would not have been the least facetious of his burlesques.

PETER CORNEILLE.

Exact Racine and Corneille's noble fire
Show'd us that France had something to admire.
Pope.

The great Corneille having finished his studies, devoted himself to the bar; but this was not the stage on which his abilities were to be displayed. He followed the occupation of a lawyer for some time, without taste and without success. A trifling circumstance discovered to the world and to himself a different genius. A young man who was in love with a girl of the same town, having solicited him to be his companion in one of those secret visits which he paid to the lady, it happened that the stranger pleased infinitely more than his introducer. The pleasure arising from this adventure

excited in Corneille a talent which had hitherto been unknown to him, and he attempted, as if it were by inspiration, dramatic poetry. On this little subject, he wrote his comedy of Mélite, in 1625. At that moment the French drama was at a low ebb: the most favourable ideas were formed of our juvenile poet, and comedy, it was expected, would now reach its perfection. After the tumult of approbation had ceased, the critics thought that Mélite was too simple and barren of incident. Roused by this criticism, our poet wrote his Clitandre, and in that piece has scattered incidents and adventures with such a licentious profusion, that the critics say he wrote it rather to expose the public taste than to accommodate himself to it. In this piece the persons combat on the theatre; there are murders and assassinations; heroines fight; officers appear in search of murderers, and women are disguised as men. There is matter sufficient for a romance of ten volumes; "And yet," says a French critic, "nothing can be more cold and tiresome." He afterwards indulged his natural genius in various other performances; but began to display more forcibly his tragic powers in Medea. A comedy which he afterwards wrote was a very indifferent composition. He regained his full lustre in the famous Cid, a tragedy, of which he preserved in his closet translations in all the European languages, except the Sclavonian and the Turkish. He pursued his poetical career with uncommon splendour in the Horaces, Cinna, and at length in Polieuctes; which productions, the French critics say, can never be surpassed.

At length the tragedy of "Pertharite" appeared, and proved unsuccessful. This so much disgusted our veteran bard, that, like Ben Jonson, he could not conceal his chagrin in the preface. There the poet tells us that he renounces the theatre for ever! and indeed this *eternity* lasted for *several years!*

Disgusted by the fate of his unfortunate tragedy, he directed his poetical pursuits to a different species of composition. He now finished his translation in verse, of the "Imitation of Jesus Christ, by Thomas à Kempis." This work, perhaps from the singularity of its dramatic author becoming a religious writer, was attended with astonishing success. Yet Fontenelle did not find in this translation the prevailing charm of the original, which consists in that simplicity and *naiveté* which are lost in the pomp of versification so natural to Corneille. "This book," he continues, "the finest that ever proceeded from the hand of man (since the gospel does not come from man) would not go so direct to the heart, and would not seize on it with such force, if it had not a natural and tender air, to which even that negligence which prevails in the style greatly contributes." Voltaire appears to confirm the opinion of our critic, in respect to the translation: "It is reported that Corneille's translation of the Imitation of Jesus Christ has been printed thirty-two times; it is as difficult to believe this as it is to *read the book once!*"

Corneille seems not to have been ignorant of the truth of this criticism. In his dedication to the Pope, he says, "The translation which I have chosen, by the

simplicity of its style, precludes all the rich ornaments of poetry, and far from increasing my reputation, must be considered rather as a sacrifice made to the glory of the Sovereign Author of all, which I may have acquired by my poetical productions." This is an excellent elucidation of the truth of that precept of Johnson which respects religious poetry; but of which the author of "Calvary" seemed not to have been sensible. The merit of religious compositions appears, like this "Imitation of Jesus Christ," to consist in a simplicity inimical to the higher poetical embellishments; these are too human!

When Racine, the son, published a long poem on "Grace," taken in its holy sense, a most unhappy subject at least for poetry, it was said that he had written on *Grace* without *grace*.

During the space of six years Corneille rigorously kept his promise of not writing for the theatre. At length, overpowered by the persuasions of his friends, and probably by his own inclinations, he once more directed his studies to the drama. He recommenced in 1659, and finished in 1675. During this time he wrote ten new pieces, and published a variety of little religious poems, which, although they do not attract the attention of posterity, were then read with delight, and probably preferred to the finest tragedies by the good catholics of the day.

In 1675 he terminated his career. In the last year of his life his mind became so enfeebled as to be incapable of thinking; and he died in extreme poverty. It

is true that his uncommon genius had been amply rewarded; but amongst his talents that of preserving the favours of fortune he had not acquired.

Fontenelle, his nephew, presents a minute and interesting description of this great man. Vigneul Marville says, that when he saw Corneille he had the appearance of a country tradesman, and he could not conceive how a man of so rustic an appearance could put into the mouths of his Romans such heroic sentiments. Corneille was sufficiently large and full in his person; his air simple and vulgar; always negligent; and very little solicitous of pleasing by his exterior. His face had something agreeable, his nose large, his mouth not unhandsome, his eyes full of fire, his physiognomy lively, with strong features, well adapted to be transmitted to posterity on a medal or bust. His pronunciation was not very distinct: and he read his verses with force, but without grace.

He was acquainted with polite literature, with history, and politics; but he generally knew them best as they related to the stage. For other knowledge he had neither leisure, curiosity, nor much esteem. He spoke little, even on subjects which he perfectly understood. He did not embellish what he said, and to discover the great Corneille it became necessary to read him.

He was of a melancholy disposition, had something blunt in his manner, and sometimes he appeared rude; but in fact he was no disagreeable companion, and made a good father and husband. He was tender, and his soul was very susceptible of friendship. His consti-

tution was very favourable to love, but never to debauchery, and rarely to violent attachments. His soul was fierce and independent: it could never be managed, for it would never bend. This indeed rendered him very capable of portraying Roman virtue, but incapable of improving his fortune. Nothing equalled his incapacity for business but his aversion: the slightest troubles of this kind occasioned him alarm and terror. He was never satiated with praise, although he was continually receiving it; but if he was sensible to fame, he was far removed from vanity.

What Fontenelle observes of Corneille's love of fame is strongly proved by our great poet himself, in an epistle to a friend, in which we find the following remarkable description of himself; an instance that what the world calls vanity, at least interests in a great genius.

Nous nous aimons un peu, c'est notre foible à tous;
Le prix que nos valons qui le sçait mieux que nous?
Et puis la mode en est, et la cour l'autorise,
Nous parlons de nous mêmes avec tout franchise,
La fausse humilité ne met plus en credit.
Je sçais ce que je vaux, et crois ce qu'on m'en dit,
Pour me faire admirer je ne fais point de ligue;
J'ai peu de voix pour moi, mais je les ai sans brigue;
Et mon ambition, pour faire plus de bruit
Ne les va point quêter de reduit en reduit.
Mon travail sans appui monte sur le theatre,
Chacun en liberté l'y blame ou l'idolâtre;
Là, sans que mes amis prêchent leur sentimens,
J'arrache quelquefois leurs applaudissemens;
Là, content du succes que le mérite donne,
Par d'illustres avis je n'eblouis personne;

Je satisfais ensemble et peuple et courtisans ;
Et mes vers en tous lieux sont mes seuls partisans ;
Par leur seule beauté ma plume est estimée ;
Je ne dois qu'a moi seul toute ma renommée ;
Et pense toutefois n'avoir point de rival,
A qui je fasse tort, en le traitant d'égal.

I give his sentiments in English verse.

Self-love prevails too much in every state ;
Who, like ourselves, our secret worth can rate?
Since 'tis a fashion authorised at court,
Frankly our merits we ourselves report.
A proud humility will not deceive ;
I know my worth ; what others say, believe.
To be admired I form no petty league :
Few are my friends, but gain'd without intrigue.
My bold ambition, destitute of grace,
Scorns still to beg their votes from place to place.
On the fair stage my scenic toils I raise,
While each is free to censure or to praise :
And there, unaided by inferior arts,
I snatch the applause that rushes from their hearts.
Content by Merit still to win the crown,
With no illustrious names I cheat the town.
The galleries thunder, and the pit commends ;
My verses, every where, my only friends !
'Tis from their charms alone my praise I claim ;
'Tis to myself alone, I owe my fame ;
And know no rival whom I fear to meet,
Or injure, when I grant an equal seat.

Voltaire censures Corneille for making his heroes say continually they are great men. But in drawing the character of an hero he draws his own. All his heroes are only so many Corneilles in different situations.

Thomas Corneille attempted the same career as his brother: perhaps his name was unfortunate, for it naturally excited a comparison which could not be favourable to him. Gaçon, the Dennis of his day, wrote the following smart impromptu under his portrait:—

Voyant le portrait de Corneille,
Gardez vous de crier merveille!
Et dans vos transports n'allez pas,
Prendre ici *Pierre* pour *Thomas*.

POETS.

In all ages there has existed an anti-poetical party. This faction consists of those frigid intellects incapable of that glowing expansion so necessary to feel the charms of an art, which only addresses itself to the imagination; or of writers who, having proved unsuccessful in their court to the muses, revenge themselves by reviling them; and also of those religious minds who consider the ardent effusions of poetry as dangerous to the morals and peace of society.

Plato, amongst the ancients, is the model of those moderns who profess themselves to be ANTI-POETICAL.

This writer, in his ideal republic, characterises a man who occupies himself with composing verses as a very dangerous member of society, from the inflammatory tendency of his writings. It is by arguing from its abuse, that he decries this enchanting talent. At the same time it is to be recollected, that no head was more finely organised for the visions of the

muse than Plato's: he was a true poet, and had addicted himself in his prime of life to the cultivation of the art, but perceiving that he could not surpass his inimitable original, Homer, he employed this insidious manner of depreciating his works. In the Phædrus he describes the feelings of a genuine Poet. To become such, he says, it will never be sufficient to be guided by the rules of art, unless we also feel the ecstasies of that *furor*, almost divine, which in this kind of composition is the most palpable and least ambiguous character of a true inspiration. Cold minds, ever tranquil and ever in possession of themselves, are incapable of producing exalted poetry; their verses must always be feeble, diffusive, and leave no impression; the verses of those who are endowed with a strong and lively imagination, and who, like Homer's personification of Discord, have their heads incessantly in the skies, and their feet on the earth, will agitate you, burn in your heart, and drag you along with them; breaking like an impetuous torrent, and swelling your breast with that enthusiasm with which they are themselves possessed.

Such is the character of a *poet* in a *poetical age!*— The tuneful race have many corporate bodies of mechanics; Pontipool manufacturers, inlayers, burnishers, gilders, and filers!

Men of taste are sometimes disgusted in turning over the works of the anti-poetical, by meeting with gross railleries and false judgments concerning poetry and poets. Locke has expressed a marked contempt of

poets; but we see what ideas he formed of poetry by his warm panegyric of one of Blackmore's epics! and besides he was himself a most unhappy poet! Selden, a scholar of profound erudition, has given us *his* opinion concerning poets. "It is ridiculous for a *lord* to print verses; he may make them to please himself. If a man in a private chamber twirls his band-strings, or plays with a rush to please himself, it is well enough; but if he should go into Fleet-street, and sit upon a stall and twirl a band-string, or play with a rush, then all the boys in the street would laugh at him."—As if "the sublime and the beautiful" can endure a comparison with the twirling of a band-string, or playing with a rush!—A poet, related to an illustrious family, and who did not write unpoetically, entertained a far different notion concerning poets. So persuaded was he that to be a true poet required an elevated mind, that it was a maxim with him that no writer could be an excellent poet who was not descended from a noble family. This opinion is as absurd as that of Selden's:—but when one party will not grant enough, the other always assumes too much. The great Pascal, whose extraordinary genius was discovered in the sciences, knew little of the nature of poetical beauty. He said "Poetry has no settled object." This was the decision of a geometrician, not of a poet. "Why should he speak of what he did not understand?" asked the lively Voltaire. Poetry is not an object which comes under the cognisance of philosophy or wit.

Longuerue had profound erudition; but he decided

on poetry in the same manner as those learned men. Nothing so strongly characterises such literary men as the following observations in the Longuerana, p. 170.

"There are two *books on Homer*, which I prefer to *Homer himself.* The first is *Antiquitates Homericæ* of Feithius, where he has extracted everything relative to the usages and customs of the Greeks; the other is, *Homeri Gnomologia per Duportum*, printed at Cambridge. In these two books is found everything valuable in Homer, without being obliged to get through his *Contes à dormir debout!*" Thus men of *science* decide on men of *taste!* There are who study Homer and Virgil as the blind travel through a fine country, merely to get to the end of their journey. It was observed at the death of Longuerue that in his immense library not a volume of poetry was to be found. He had formerly read poetry, for indeed he had read everything. Racine tells us, that when young he paid him a visit; the conversation turned on *poets;* our *erudit* reviewed them all with the most ineffable contempt of the poetical talent, from which he said we learn nothing. He seemed a little charitable towards Ariosto.—"As for that *madman*," said he "he has amused me sometimes." Dacier, a poetical pedant after all, was asked who was the greater poet, Homer or Virgil? he honestly answered, "Homer by a thousand years!"

But it is mortifying to find among the *anti-poetical* even *poets* themselves! Malherbe, the first poet in France in his day, appears little to have esteemed the art. He used to say that "a good poet was not more

useful to the state than a skilful player of nine-pins!" Malherbe wrote with costive labour. When a poem was shown to him which had been highly commended, he sarcastically asked if it would "lower the price of bread?" In these instances he maliciously confounded the *useful* with the *agreeable* arts. Be it remembered, that Malherbe had a cynical heart, cold and unfeeling: his character may be traced in his poetry: labour, and correctness, without one ray of enthusiasm.

Le Clerc was a scholar not entirely unworthy to be ranked amongst the Lockes, the Seldens, and the Longuerues; and his opinions are as just concerning poets. In the Parrhasiana he has written a treatise on poets in a very unpoetical manner. I shall notice his coarse railleries relating to what he calls "the personal defects of poets." In vol. i. p. 33, he says, "In the Scaligerana we have Joseph Scaliger's opinion concerning poets. 'There never was a man who was a poet, or addicted to the study of poetry, but his heart was puffed up with his greatness.'—This is very true. The poetical enthusiasm persuades those gentlemen, that they have something in them superior to others, because they employ a language peculiar to themselves. When the poetic furor seizes them, its traces frequently remain on their faces, which make connoisseurs say with Horace,

Aut insanit homo, aut versus facit.
There goes a madman or a bard!

Their thoughtful air and melancholy gait make them appear insane; for, accustomed to versify whilethey walk, and to bite their nails in apparent agonies, their

steps are measured and slow, and they look as if they were reflecting on something of consequence, although they are only thinking, as the phrase runs, of nothing!" I have only transcribed the above description of our jocular scholar, with an intention of describing those exterior marks of that fine enthusiasm, of which the poet is peculiarly susceptible, and which have exposed many an elevated genius to the ridicule of the vulgar.

I find this admirably defended by Charpentier: "Men may ridicule as much as they please those gesticulations and contortions which poets are apt to make in the act of composing; it is certain, however, that they greatly assist in putting the imagination into motion. These kinds of agitation do not always show a mind which labours with its sterility; they frequently proceed from a mind which excites and animates itself. Quintilian has nobly compared them to those lashings of his tail which a lion gives himself when he is preparing to combat. Persius, when he would give us an idea of a cold and languishing oration, says that its author did not strike his desk nor bite his nails.

Nec pluteum cædit, nec demorsos sapit ungues."

These exterior marks of enthusiasm may be illustrated by the following curious anecdote: — Domenichino, the painter, was accustomed to act the characters of all the figures he would represent on his canvas, and to speak aloud whatever the passion he meant to describe could prompt. Painting the martyrdom of St. Andrew, Carracci one day caught him in a violent passion, speaking in a terrible and menacing tone. He

was at that moment employed on a soldier who was threatening the saint. When this fit of enthusiastic abstraction had passed, Carracci ran and embraced him, acknowledging that Domenichino had been that day his master; and that he had learnt from him the true manner to succeed in catching the expression — that great pride of the painter's art.

Thus different are the sentiments of the intelligent and the unintelligent on the same subject. A Carracci embraced a kindred genius for what a Le Clerc or a Selden would have ridiculed.

Poets, I confess, frequently indulge *reveries*, which, though they offer no charms to their friends, are too delicious to forego. In the ideal world, peopled with all its fairy inhabitants, and ever open to their contemplation, they travel with an unwearied foot. Crebillon, the celebrated tragic poet, was enamoured of solitude, that he might there indulge, without interruption, in those fine romances with which his imagination teemed. One day when he was in a deep reverie, a friend entered hastily: "Don't disturb me," cried the poet; "I am enjoying a moment of happiness: I am going to hang a villain of a minister, and banish another who is an idiot."

Amongst the anti-poetical may be placed the father of the great monarch of Prussia. George the Second was not more the avowed enemy of the muses. Frederic would not suffer the prince to read verses; and when he was desirous of study, or of the conversation of literary men, he was obliged to do it secretly. Every poet was

odious to his majesty. One day, having observed some lines written on one of the doors of the palace, he asked a courtier their signification. They were explained to him; they were Latin verses composed by Wachter, a man of letters, then resident at Berlin. The king immediately sent for the bard, who came warm with the hope of receiving a reward for his ingenuity. He was astonished, however, to hear the king, in a violent passion, accost him, "I order you immediately to quit this city and my kingdom." Wachter took refuge in Hanover. As little indeed was this anti-poetical monarch a friend to philosophers. Two or three such kings might perhaps renovate the ancient barbarism of Europe. Barratier, the celebrated child, was presented to his majesty of Prussia as a prodigy of erudition; the king, to mortify our ingenious youth, coldly asked him, "If he knew the law?" The learned boy was constrained to acknowledge that he knew nothing of law. "Go," was the reply of this Augustus, "go, and study it before you give yourself out as a scholar." Poor Barratier renounced for this pursuit his other studies, and persevered with such ardour that he became an excellent lawyer at the end of fifteen months; but his exertions cost him at the same time his life!

Every monarch, however, has not proved so destitute of poetic sensibility as this Prussian. Francis I. gave repeated marks of his attachment to the favourites of the muses, by composing several occasional sonnets, which are dedicated to their eulogy. Andrelin, a French

poet, enjoyed the happy fate of Oppian, to whom the emperor Caracalla counted as many pieces of gold as there were verses in one of his poems; and with great propriety they have been called "golden verses." Andrelin, when he recited his poem on the Conquest of Naples before Charles VIII., received a sack of silver coin, which with difficulty he carried home. Charles IX., says Brantome, loved verses, and recompensed poets, not indeed immediately, but gradually, that they might always be stimulated to excel. He used to say, that poets resembled racehorses, that must be fed but not fattened, for then they were good for nothing. Marot was so much esteemed by kings, that he was called the poet of princes, and the prince of poets.

In the early state of poetry what honours were paid to its votaries! Ronsard, the French Chaucer, was the first who carried away the prize at the Floral games. This meed of poetic honour was an eglantine composed of silver. The reward did not appear equal to the merit of the work and the reputation of the poet; and on this occasion the city of Toulouse had a Minerva of solid silver struck, of considerable value. This image was sent to Ronsard, accompanied by a decree, in which he was declared, by way of eminence, "The French poet."

It is a curious anecdote to add, that when, at a later period, a similar Minerva was adjudged to Maynard for his verses, the Capitouls of Toulouse, who were the executors of the Floral gifts, to their shame, out of covetousness, never obeyed the decision of the poetical

judges. This circumstance is noticed by Maynard in an epigram, which bears this title: *On a Minerva of silver, promised but not given.*

The anecdote of Margaret of Scotland, wife of the Dauphin of France, and Alain the poet, is generally known. Who is not charmed with that fine expression of her poetical sensibility? The person of Alain was repulsive, but his poetry had attracted her affections. Passing through one of the halls of the palace, she saw him sleeping on a bench; she approached and kissed him. Some of her attendants could not conceal their astonishment that she should press with her lips those of a man so frightfully ugly. The amiable princess answered, smiling, "I did not kiss the man, but the mouth which has uttered so many fine things."

The great Colbert paid a pretty compliment to Boileau and Racine. This minister, at his villa, was enjoying the conversation of our two poets, when the arrival of a prelate was announced: turning quickly to the servant, he said, "Let him be shown every thing except myself!"

To such attentions from this great minister, Boileau alludes in these verses: —

> Plus d'un grand, m'aima jusques à la tendresse;
> Et ma vue à Colbert inspiroit l'allegresse.

Several pious persons have considered it as highly meritable to abstain from the reading of poetry! A good father, in his account of the last hours of Madame Racine, the lady of the celebrated tragic poet, pays

high compliments to her religious disposition, which, he says, was so austere, that she would not allow herself to read poetry, as she considered it to be a dangerous pleasure; and he highly commends her for never having read the tragedies of her husband! Arnauld, though so intimately connected with Racine for many years, had not read his compositions. When, at length, he was persuaded to read Phædra, he declared himself to be delighted, but complained that the poet had set a dangerous example, in making the manly Hypolitus dwindle to an effeminate lover. As a critic, Arnauld was right; but Racine had his nation to please. Such persons entertain notions of poetry similar to that of an ancient father, who calls poetry the wine of Satan; or to that of the religious and austere Nicole, who was so ably answered by Racine: he said, that dramatic poets were public poisoners, not of bodies, but of souls.

Poets, it is acknowledged, have foibles peculiar to themselves. They sometimes act in the daily commerce of life as if every one was concerned in the success of their productions. Poets are too frequently merely poets. Segrais has recorded that the following maxim of Rochefoucault was occasioned by reflecting on the characters of Boileau and Racine. "It displays," he writes, "a great poverty of mind to have only one kind of genius." On this Segrais observes, and Segrais knew them intimately, that their conversation only turned on poetry; take them from that, and they knew nothing. It was thus with one Du Perrier, a good poet, but very poor. When he was introduced to Pelis-

son, who wished to be serviceable to him, the minister said, "In what can he be employed? He is only occupied by his verses."

All these complaints are not unfounded; yet, perhaps, it is unjust to expect from an excelling artist all the petty accomplishments of frivolous persons, who have studied no art but that of practising on the weaknesses of their friends. The enthusiastic votary, who devotes his days and nights to meditations on his favourite art, will rarely be found that despicable thing, a mere man of the world. Du Bos has justly observed, that men of genius, born for a particular profession, appear inferior to others when they apply themselves to other occupations. That absence of mind which arises from their continued attention to their ideas, renders them awkward in their manners. Such defects are even a proof of the activity of genius.

It is a common foible with poets to read their verses to friends. Segrais has ingeniously observed, to use his own words, "When young I used to please myself in reciting my verses indifferently to all persons; but I perceived when Scarron, who was my intimate friend, used to take his portfolio and read his verses to me, although they were good, I frequently became weary. I then reflected, that those to whom I read mine, and who, for the greater part, had no taste for poetry, must experience the same disagreeable sensation. I resolved for the future to read my verses only to those who entreated me, and to read but few at a time. We flatter ourselves too much; we conclude that what pleases us

must please others. We will have persons indulgent to us, and frequently we will have no indulgence for those who are in want of it." An excellent hint for young poets, and for those old ones who carry odes and elegies in their pockets, to inflict the pains of the torture on their friends.

The affection which a poet feels for his verses has been frequently extravagant. Bayle, ridiculing that parental tenderness which writers evince for their poetical compositions, tells us, that many having written epitaphs on friends whom they believed on report to have died, could not determine to keep them in their closet, but suffered them to appear in the lifetime of those very friends whose death they celebrated. In another place he says, that such is their infatuation for their productions, that they prefer giving to the public their panegyrics of persons whom afterwards they satirised, rather than suppress the verses which contain those panegyrics. We have many examples of this in the poems, and even in the epistolary correspondence of modern writers. It is customary with most authors, when they quarrel with a person after the first edition of their work, to cancel his eulogies in the next. But poets and letter-writers frequently do not do this; because they are so charmed with the happy turn of their expressions, and other elegancies of composition, that they prefer the praise which they may acquire for their style to the censure which may follow from their inconsistency.

After having given a hint to *young* poets, I shall offer one to *veterans*. It is a common defect with them

that they do not know when to quit the muses in their advanced age. Bayle says, "Poets and orators should be mindful to retire from their occupations, which so peculiarly require the fire of imagination; yet it is but too common to see them in their career, even in the decline of life. It seems as if they would condemn the public to drink even the lees of their nectar." Afer and Daurat were both poets who had acquired considerable reputation, but which they overturned when they persisted to write in their old age without vigour and without fancy.

> What crowds of these impenitently bold,
> In sounds and jingling syllables grown old,
> They run on poets, in a raging vein,
> E'en to the dregs and squeezings of the brain:
> Strain out the last dull droppings of their sense,
> And rhyme with all the rage of impotence.
>
> POPE.

It is probable he had Wycherley in his eye when he wrote this. The veteran bard latterly scribbled much indifferent verse; and Pope had freely given his opinion, by which he lost his friendship!

It is still worse when aged poets devote their exhausted talents to *divine poems*, as did Waller; and Milton in his second epic. Such poems, observes Voltaire, are frequently entitled "*sacred poems;*" and *sacred* they are, for no one touches them. From a soil so arid what can be expected but insipid fruits? Corneille told Chevreau several years before his death, that he had taken leave of the theatre, for he had lost his poetical powers with his teeth.

Poets have sometimes displayed an obliquity of taste in their female favourites. As if conscious of the power of ennobling others, some have selected them from the lowest classes, whom having elevated into divinities, they have addressed in the language of poetical devotion. The Chloe of Prior, after all his raptures, was a plump bar-maid. Ronsard addressed many of his verses to Miss Cassandra, who followed the same occupation: in one of his sonnets to her, he fills it with a crowd of personages taken from the Iliad, which to the honest girl must have all been extremely mysterious. Colletet, a French bard, married three of his servants. His last lady was called *la belle Claudine*. Ashamed of such menial alliances, he attempted to persuade the world that he had married the tenth muse; and for this purpose published verses in her name. When he died, the vein of Claudine became suddenly dry. She indeed published her "Adieux to the Muses;" but it was soon discovered that all the verses of this lady, including her "Adieux," were the compositions of her husband.

Sometimes, indeed, the ostensible mistresses of poets have no existence; and a slight occasion is sufficient to give birth to one. Racan and Malherbe were one day conversing on their amours; that is, of selecting a lady who should be the object of their verses. Racan named one, and Malherbe another. It happening that both had the same name, Catharine, they passed the whole afternoon in forming it into an anagram. They found three: Arthenice, Eracinthe, and Charinté. The

first was preferred; and many a fine ode was written in praise of the beautiful Arthenice!

Poets change their opinions of their own productions wonderfully at different periods of life. Baron Haller was in his youth warmly attached to poetic composition. His house was on fire, and to rescue his poems he rushed through the flames. He was so fortunate as to escape with his beloved manuscripts in his hand. Ten years afterwards he condemned to the flames those very poems which he had ventured his life to preserve.

Satirists, if they escape the scourges of the law, have reason to dread the cane of the satirised. Of this kind we have many anecdotes on record; but none more poignant than the following:—Benserade was caned for lampooning the Duke d'Epernon. Some days afterwards he appeared at court, but being still lame from the rough treatment he had received, he was forced to support himself by a cane. A wit, who knew what had passed, whispered the affair to the queen. She, dissembling, asked him if he had the gout? "Yes, madam," replied our lame satirist, "and therefore I make use of a cane." "Not so," interrupted the malignant Bautru, "Benserade in this imitates those holy martyrs who are always represented with the instrument which occasioned their sufferings."

ROMANCES.

Romance has been elegantly defined as the offspring of Fiction and Love. Men of learning have amused

themselves with tracing the epocha of romances; but the erudition is desperate which would fix on the inventor of the first romance: for what originates in nature, who shall hope to detect the shadowy outlines of its beginnings? The Theagenes and Chariclea of Heliodorus appeared in the fourth century; and this elegant prelate was the Grecian Fenelon. It has been prettily said, that posterior romances seem to be the children of the marriage of Theagenes and Chariclea. The Romance of "The Golden Ass," by Apuleius, which contains the beautiful tale of "Cupid and Psyche," remains unrivalled; while the "Daphne and Chloe" of Longus, in the old version of Amiot, is inexpressibly delicate, simple, and inartificial, but sometimes offends us, for nature there "plays her virgin fancies"

Beautiful as these compositions are, when the imagination of the writer is sufficiently stored with accurate observations on human nature, in their birth, like many of the fine arts, the zealots of an ascetic religion opposed their progress. However Heliodorus may have delighted those who were not insensible to the felicities of a fine imagination, and to the enchanting elegancies of style, he raised himself, among his brother ecclesiastics, enemies, who at length so far prevailed, that, in a synod, it was declared that his performance was dangerous to young persons, and that if the author did not suppress it, he must resign his bishopric. We are told he preferred his romance to his bishopric. Even so late as in Racine's time it was held a crime to peruse these unhallowed pages. He informs us that the first

effusions of his muse were in consequence of studying that ancient romance, which his tutor observing him to devour with the keenness of a famished man, snatched from his hands and flung it in the fire. A second copy experienced the same fate. What could Racine do? He bought a third, and took the precaution of devouring it secretly till he got it by heart; after which he offered it to the pedagogue with a smile, to burn like the others.

The decision of these ascetic bigots was founded in their opinion of the immorality of such works. They alleged that the writers paint too warmly to the imagination, address themselves too forcibly to the passions, and in general, by the freedom of their representations, hover on the borders of indecency. Let it be sufficient, however, to observe, that those who condemned the liberties which these writers take with the imagination could indulge themselves with the Anacreontic voluptuousness of the wise *Solomon*, when sanctioned by the authority of the church.

The marvellous power of romance over the human mind is exemplified in this curious anecdote of oriental literature.

Mahomet found they had such an influence over the imaginations of his followers, that he has expressly forbidden them in his Koran; and the reason is given in the following anecdote:—An Arabian merchant having long resided in Persia, returned to his own country while the prophet was publishing his Koran. The merchant, among his other riches, had a treasure of

romances concerning the Persian heroes. These he related to his delighted countrymen, who considered them to be so excellent, that the legends of the Koran were neglected, and they plainly told the prophet that the "Persian Tales" were superior to his. Alarmed, he immediately had a visitation from the angel Gabriel, declaring them impious and pernicious, hateful to God and Mahomet. This checked their currency; and all true believers yielded up the exquisite delight of poetic fictions for the insipidity of religious ones. Yet these romances may be said to have outlived the Koran itself; for they have spread into regions which the Koran could never penetrate. Even to this day Colonel Capper, in his travels across the Desert, saw "Arabians sitting round a fire, listening to their tales with such attention and pleasure, as totally to forget the fatigue and hardship with which an instant before they were entirely overcome." And Wood, in his journey to Palmyra:— "At night the Arabs sat in a circle drinking coffee, while one of the company diverted the rest by relating a piece of history on the subject of love or war, or with an extempore tale."

Mr. Ellis has given us "Specimens of the Early English Metrical Romances," and Ritson and Weber have printed two collections of them entire, valued by the poetical antiquary. Learned inquirers have traced the origin of romantic fiction to various sources. From Scandinavia issued forth the giants, dragons, witches, and enchanters. The curious reader will be gratified by "Illustrations of Northern Antiquities," a volume in

quarto; where he will find extracts from "The Book of Heroes" and "The Nibelungen Lay," with many other metrical tales from the old German, Danish, Swedish, and Icelandic languages. In the East, Arabian fancy bent her iris of many-softened hues over a delightful land of fiction; while the Welsh, in their emigration to Britany, are believed to have brought with them their national fables. That subsequent race of minstrels, known by the name of *Troubadours* in the South of France, composed their erotic or sentimental poems; and those romancers called *Trouveurs*, or finders, in the North of France, culled and compiled their domestic tales or *Fabliaux*, *Dits*, *Conte*, or *Lai*. Millot, Sainte Palaye, and Le Grand have preserved, in their "Histories of the Troubadours," their literary compositions. They were a romantic race of ambulatory poets; military and religious subjects their favourite themes, yet bold and satirical on princes, and even on priests; severe moralisers, though libertines in their verse; so refined and chaste in their manners, that few husbands were alarmed at the enthusiastic language they addressed to their wives. The most romantic incidents are told of their loves. But love and its grosser passion were clearly distinguished from each other in their singular intercourse with their "Dames." The object of their mind was separated from the object of their senses; the virtuous lady to whom they vowed their hearts was in their language styled "*la dame de ses pensées*," a very distinct being from their other mistress! Such was the Platonic chimera that charmed in the age of chivalry;

the Laura of Petrarch might have been no other than "the lady of his thoughts."

From such productions in their improved state poets of all nations have drawn their richest inventions. The agreeable wildness of that fancy which characterised the Eastern nations was often caught by the crusaders. When they returned home, they mingled in their own the customs of each country. The Saracens, being of another religion, brave, desperate, and fighting for their father-land, were enlarged to their fears, under the tremendous form of *Paynim Giants*, while the reader of that day followed with trembling sympathy the *Red-cross Knight*. Thus fiction embellished religion, and religion invigorated fiction; and such incidents have enlivened the cantos of Ariosto, and adorned the epic of Tasso. Spenser is the child of their creation; and it is certain that we are indebted to them for some of the bold and strong touches of Milton. Our great poet marks his affection for "these lofty Fables and Romances, among which his young feet wandered." Collins was bewildered among their magical seductions; and Dr. Johnson was enthusiastically delighted by the old Spanish folio romance of "Felixmarte of Hircania," and similar works. The most ancient romances were originally composed in verse before they were converted into prose: no wonder that the lacerated members of the poet have been cherished by the sympathy of poetical souls. Don Quixote's was a very agreeable insanity.

The most voluminous of these ancient romances is "Le Roman de Perceforest." I have seen an edition

in six small folio volumes, and its author has been called the French Homer by the writers of his age. In the class of romances of chivalry, we have several translations in the black-letter. These books are very rare, and their price is as voluminous. It is extraordinary that these writers were so unconscious of their future fame, that not one of their names has travelled down to us. There were eager readers in their days, but not a solitary bibliographer! All these romances now require some indulgence for their prolixity, and their Platonic amours; but they have not been surpassed in the wildness of their inventions, the ingenuity of their incidents, the simplicity of their style, and their curious manners. Many a Homer lies hid among them; but a celebrated Italian critic suggested to me that many of the fables of Homer are only disguised and degraded in the romances of chivalry. Those who vilify them as only barbarous imitations of classical fancy condemn them as some do Gothic architecture, as mere corruptions of a purer style: such critics form their decision by preconceived notions; they are but indifferent philosophers, and to us seem to be deficient in imagination.

As a specimen I select two romantic adventures:—

The title of the extensive romance of Perceforest is, "The most elegant, delicious, mellifluous, and delightful history of Perceforest, King of Great Britain, &c." The most ancient edition is that of 1528. The writers of these Gothic fables, lest they should be considered as mere triflers, pretended to an allegorical meaning concealed under the texture of their fable. From the

following adventure we learn the power of beauty in making *ten days* appear as *yesterday!* Alexander the Great in search of Perceforest, parts with his knights in an enchanted wood, and each vows they will not remain longer than one night in one place. Alexander, accompanied by a page, arrives at Sebilla's castle, who is a sorceress. He is taken by her witcheries and beauty, and the page, by the lady's maid, falls into the same mistake as his master, who thinks he is there only one night. They enter the castle with deep wounds, and issue perfectly recovered. I transcribe the latter part as a specimen of the manner. When they were once out of the castle, the king said, "Truly, Floridas, I know not how it has been with me; but certainly Sebilla is a very honourable lady, and very beautiful, and very charming in conversation. Sire, (said Floridas), it is true; but one thing surprises me:—how is it that our wounds have healed in one night? I thought at least ten or fifteen days were necessary. Truly, said the king, that is astonishing! Now king Alexander met Gadiffer, king of Scotland, and the valiant knight Le Tors. Well, said the king, have ye news of the king of England? Ten days we have hunted him, and cannot find him out. How, said Alexander, did we not separate *yesterday* from each other? In God's name, said Gadiffer, what means your majesty? It is *ten days!* Have a care what you say, cried the king. Sire, replied Gadiffer, it is so; ask Le Tors. On my honour, said Le Tors, the king of Scotland speaks truth. Then, said the king, some of us are enchanted. Floridas, didst

thou not think we separated *yesterday?* Truly, truly, your majesty, I thought so! But when I saw our wounds healed in one night, I had some suspicion that WE were *enchanted.*"

In the old romance of Melusina, this lovely fairy, (though to the world unknown as such), enamoured of Count Raymond, marries him, but first extorts a solemn promise that he will never disturb her on Saturdays. On those days the inferior parts of her body are metamorphosed to that of a mermaid, as a punishment for a former error. Agitated by the malicious insinuations of a friend, his curiosity and his jealousy one day conduct him to the spot she retired to at those times. It was a darkened passage in the dungeon of the fortress. His hand gropes its way till it feels an iron gate oppose it; nor can he discover a single chink, but at length perceives by his touch a loose nail; he places his sword in its head and screws it out. Through this hole he sees Melusina in the horrid form she is compelled to assume. That tender mistress, transformed into a monster bathing in a fount, flashing the spray of the water from a scaly tail! He repents of his fatal curiosity: she reproaches him, and their mutual happiness is for ever lost! The moral design of the tale evidently warns the lover to revere a *Woman's Secret!*

Such are the works which were the favourite amusements of our English court, and which doubtless had a due effect in refining the manners of the age, in diffusing that splendid military genius, and that tender devotion to the fair sex, which dazzle us in the reign of Edward III.

and through that enchanting labyrinth of History constructed by the gallant Froissart. In one of the revenue rolls of Henry III. there is an entry of "Silver clasps and studs for his majesty's *great book of Romances*." Dr. Moore observes that the enthusiastic admiration of chivalry which Edward III. manifested during the whole course of his reign, was probably in some measure owing to his having studied the *clasped book* in his great grandfather's library.

The Italian romances of the fourteenth century were spread abroad in great numbers. They formed the polite literature of the day. But if it is not permitted to authors freely to express their ideas, and give full play to the imagination, these works must never be placed in the study of the rigid moralist. They, indeed, pushed their indelicacy to the verge of grossness, and seemed rather to seek than to avoid scenes, which a modern would blush to describe. They, to employ the expression of one of their authors, were not ashamed to name what God had created. Cinthio, Bandello, and others, but chiefly Boccaccio, rendered libertinism agreeable by the fascinating charms of a polished style and a luxuriant imagination.

This, however, must not be admitted as an apology for immoral works; for poison is not the less poison, even when delicious. Such works were, and still continue to be, the favourites of a nation stigmatised for being prone to impure amours. They are still curious in their editions, and are not parsimonious in their price for what they call an uncastrated copy. There are many

Italians, not literary men, who are in possession of an ample library of these old novelists.

If we pass over the moral irregularities of these romances, we may discover a rich vein of invention, which only requires to be released from that rubbish which disfigures it, to become of an invaluable price. The *Decamerones*, the *Hecatommiti*, and the *Novellas* of these writers, translated into English, made no inconsiderable figure in the little library of our Shakspeare. Chaucer had been a notorious imitator and lover of them. His "Knight's Tale" is little more than a paraphrase of "Boccaccio's Teseoide." Fontaine has caught all their charms with all their licentiousness. From such works, these great poets, and many of their contemporaries, frequently borrowed their plots; not uncommonly kindled at their flame the ardour of their genius; but bending too submissively to the taste of their age, in extracting the ore they have not purified it of the alloy. The origin of these tales must be traced to the inventions of the Troveurs, who doubtless often adopted them from various nations. Of these tales, Le Grand has printed a curious collection; and of the writers Mr. Ellis observes, in his preface to "Way's Fabliaux," that the authors of the "Cento Novelle Antiche," Boccaccio, Bandello, Chaucer, Gower,—in short, the writers of all Europe, have probably made use of the inventions of the elder fablers. They have borrowed their general outlines, which they have filled up with colours of their own, and have exercised their ingenuity in varying the drapery, in combining the

groups, and in forming them into more regular and animated pictures.

We now turn to the French romances of the last century, called heroic, from the circumstance of their authors adopting the name of some hero. The manners are the modern antique; and the characters are a sort of beings made out of the old epical, the Arcadian pastoral, and the Parisian sentimentality and affectation of the days of Voiture. The Astrea of D'Urfé greatly contributed to their perfection. As this work is founded on several curious circumstances, it shall be the subject of the following article; for it may be considered as a literary curiosity. The Astrea was followed by the illustrious Bassa, Artamene, or the Great Cyrus, Clelia, &c. which, though not adapted to the present age, once gave celebrity to their authors; and the Great Cyrus, in ten volumes, passed through five or six editions. Their style, as well as that of the Astrea, is diffuse and languid; yet Zaïde, and the Princess of Cleves, are master-pieces of the kind. Such works formed the first studies of Rousseau, who, with his father, would sit up all night, till warned by the chirping of the swallows how foolishly they had spent it! Some incidents in his Nouvelle Heloise have been retraced to these sources; and they certainly entered greatly into the formation of his character.

Such romances at length were regarded as pernicious to good sense, taste, and literature. It was in this light they were considered by Boileau, after he had indulged in them in his youth.

A celebrated Jesuit pronounced an oration against these works. The rhetorician exaggerates and hurls his thunders on flowers. He entreats the magistrates not to suffer foreign romances to be scattered amongst the people, but to lay on them heavy penalties as on prohibited goods; and represents this prevailing taste as being more pestilential than the plague itself. He has drawn a striking picture of a family devoted to romance reading; he there describes women occupied day and night with their perusal; children just escaped from the lap of their nurse grasping in their little hands the fairy tales; and a country squire seated in an old arm-chair, reading to his family the most wonderful passages of the ancient works of chivalry.

These romances went out of fashion with our square-cocked hats; they had exhausted the patience of the public, and from them sprung NOVELS. They attempted to allure attention by this inviting title, and reducing their works from ten to two volumes. The name of romance, including imaginary heroes and extravagant passions, disgusted; and they substituted scenes of domestic life, and touched our common feelings by pictures of real nature. Heroes were not now taken from the throne: they were sometimes even sought after amongst the lowest ranks of the people. Scarron seems to allude sarcastically to this degradation of the heroes of Fiction; for in hinting at a new comic history he had projected, he tells us that he gave it up suddenly because he had "heard that his hero had just been hanged at Mans."

Novels, as they were long *manufactured*, form a library of illiterate authors for illiterate readers; but as they are *created* by genius, are precious to the philosopher. They paint the character of an individual or the manners of the age more perfectly than any other species of composition: it is in novels we observe as it were passing under our own eyes the refined frivolity of the French; the gloomy and disordered sensibility of the German; and the petty intrigues of the modern Italian in some Venetian Novels. We have shown the world that we possess writers of the first order in this delightful province of Fiction and of Truth; for every Fiction invented naturally must be true. After the abundant invective poured on this class of books, it is time to settle for ever the controversy, by asserting that these works of fiction are among the most instructive of every polished nation, and must contain all the useful truths of human life, if composed with genius. They are pictures of the passions, useful to our youth to contemplate. That acute philosopher, Adam Smith, has given an opinion most favourable to Novels. "The poets and romance writers who best paint the refinements and delicacies of love and friendship, and of all other private and domestic affections, Racine and Voltaire, Richardson, Marivaux, and Riccoboni, are in this case much better instructors than Zeno, Chrysippus, or Epictetus."

The history of romances has been recently given by Mr. Dunlop, with many pleasing details; but this work should be accompanied by he learned Lenglet du Fres-

noy's "Bibliothèque des Romans," published under the name of M. le C. Gordon de Percel; which will be found useful for immediate reference for titles, dates, and a copious catalogue of romances and novels to the year 1734.

THE ASTREA.

I BRING the Astrea forward to point out the ingenious manner by which a fine imagination can veil the common incidents of life, and turn whatever it touches into gold.

Honoré d'Urfé was the descendant of an illustrious family. His brother Anne married Diana of Chateaumorand, the wealthy heiress of another great house. After a marriage of no less duration than twenty-two years, this union was broken by the desire of Anne himself, for a cause which the delicacy of Diana had never revealed. Anne then became an ecclesiastic. Some time afterwards, Honoré, desirous of retaining the great wealth of Diana in the family, addressed this lady, and married her. This union, however, did not prove fortunate. Diana, like the goddess of that name, was a huntress, continually surrounded by her dogs:—they dined with her at table, and slept with her in bed. This insupportable nuisance could not be patiently endured by the elegant Honoré. He was also disgusted with the barrenness of the huntress Diana, who was only delivered every year of abortions. He separated from her, and retired to Piedmont, where he passed his

remaining days in peace, without feeling the thorns of marriage and ambition rankling in his heart. In this retreat he composed his Astrea; a pastoral romance, which was the admiration of Europe during half a century. It forms a striking picture of human life, for the incidents are facts beautifully concealed. They relate the amours and gallantries of the court of Henry the Fourth. The personages in the Astrea display a rich invention; and the work might be still read, were it not for those wire-drawn conversations, or rather disputations, which were then introduced into romances. In a modern edition, the Abbé Souchai has *curtailed* these tiresome dialogues; the work still consists of ten duodecimos.

In this romance, Celidée, to cure the unfortunate Celidon, and to deprive Thamire at the same time of every reason for jealousy, tears her face with a pointed diamond, and disfigures it in so cruel a manner, that she excites horror in the breast of Thamire; but he so ardently admires this exertion of virtue, that he loves her, hideous as she is represented, still more than when she was most beautiful. Heaven, to be just to these two lovers, restores the beauty of Celidée; which is effected by a sympathetic powder. This romantic incident is thus explained:—One of the French princes (Celidon), when he returned from Italy, treated with coldness his amiable princess (Celidée); this was the effect of his violent passion, which had become jealousy. The coolness subsisted till the prince was imprisoned, for state affairs, in the wood of Vincennes. The prin-

cess, with the permission of the court, followed him into his confinement. This proof of her love soon brought back the wandering heart and affections of the prince. The small-pox seized her; which is the pointed diamond, and the dreadful disfigurement of her face. She was so fortunate as to escape being marked by this disease; which is meant by the sympathetic powder. This trivial incident is happily turned into the marvellous: that a wife should choose to be imprisoned with her husband is not singular; to escape being marked by the small-pox happens every day; but to romance, as he has done, on such common circumstances, is beautiful and ingenious.

D'Urfé, when a boy, is said to have been enamoured of Diana; this indeed has been questioned. D'Urfé, however, was sent to the island of Malta to enter into that order of knighthood; and in his absence Diana was married to Anne. What an affliction for Honoré on his return to see her married, and to his brother! His affection did not diminish, but he concealed it in respectful silence. He had some knowledge of his brother's unhappiness, and on this probably founded his hopes. After several years, during which the modest Diana had uttered no complaint, Anne declared himself; and shortly afterwards Honoré, as we have noticed, married Diana.

Our author has described the parties under this false appearance of marriage. He assumes the names of Celadon and Sylvander, and gives Diana those of Astrea and Diana. He is Sylvander and she Astrea while she

is married to Anne; and he Celadon and she Diana when the marriage is dissolved. Sylvander is represented always as a lover who sighs secretly; nor does Diana declare her passion till overcome by the long sufferings of her faithful shepherd. For this reason Astrea and Diana, as well as Sylvander and Celadon, go together, prompted by the same despair, to the FOUNTAIN of the TRUTH OF LOVE.

Sylvander is called an unknown shepherd, who has no other wealth than his flock; because our author was the youngest of his family, or rather a knight of Malta who possessed nothing but honour.

Celadon in despair throws himself into a river; this refers to his voyage to Malta. Under the name of Alexis he displays the friendship of Astrea for him, and all those innocent freedoms which passed between them as relatives: from this circumstance he has contrived a difficulty inimitably delicate.

Something of passion is to be discovered in these expressions of friendship. When Alexis assumes the name of Celadon, he calls that love which Astrea had mistaken for fraternal affection. This was the trying moment. For though she loved him, she is rigorous in her duty and honour. She says, "what will they think of me if I unite myself to him, after permitting, for so many years, those familiarities which a brother may have taken with a sister, with me, who knew that in fact I remained unmarried?"

How she got over this nice scruple does not appear; it was, however, for a long time a great obstacle to the

felicity of our author. There is an incident which shows the purity of this married virgin, who was fearful the liberties she allowed Celadon might be ill construed. Phillis tells the druid Adamas that Astrea was seen sleeping by the fountain of the Truth of Love, and that the unicorns which guarded those waters were observed to approach her, and lay their heads on her lap. According to fable, it is one of the properties of these animals never to approach any female but a maiden: at this strange difficulty our druid remains surprised; while Astrea has thus given an incontrovertible proof of her purity.

The history of Philander is that of the elder D'Urfé. None but boys disguised as girls, and girls as boys, appear in the history. In this manner he concealed, without offending modesty, the defect of his brother. To mark the truth of this history, when Philander is disguised as a woman, while he converses with Astrea of his love, he frequently alludes to his misfortune, although in another sense.

Philander, ready to expire, will die with the glorious name of the husband of Astrea. He entreats her to grant him this favour; she accords it to him, and swears before the gods that she receives him in her heart for her husband. The truth is, he enjoyed nothing but the name. Philander dies too, in combating with a hideous Moor, which is the personification of his conscience, and which at length compelled him to quit so beautiful an object, and one so worthy of being eternally beloved.

The gratitude of Sylvander, on the point of being

sacrificed, represents the consent of Honoré's parents to dissolve his vow of celibacy, and unite him to Diana; and the druid Adamas represents the ecclesiastical power. The FOUNTAIN of the TRUTH OF LOVE is that of marriage; the unicorns are the symbols of that purity which should ever guard it; and the flaming eyes of the lions, which are also there, represent those inconveniences attending marriage, but over which a faithful passion easily triumphs.

In this manner has our author disguised his own private history; and blended in his works a number of little amours which passed at the court of Henry the Great. These particulars were confided to Patru, on visiting the author in his retirement.

POETS LAUREAT.

THE present article is a sketch of the history of POETS LAUREAT, from a memoir of the French Academy, by the Abbé Resnel.

The custom of crowning poets is as ancient as poetry itself; it has, indeed, frequently varied; it existed, however, as late as the reign of Theodosius, when it was abolished as a remain of paganism.

When the barbarians overspread Europe, few appeared to merit this honour, and fewer who could have read their works. It was about the time of PETRARCH that POETRY resumed its ancient lustre; he was publicly honoured with the LAUREL CROWN. It was in this century (the thirteenth) that the establishment of

Bachelor and Doctor was fixed in the universities. Those who were found worthy of the honour, obtained the *laurel of Bachelor*, or the *laurel of Doctor; Laurea Baccalaureatus; Laurea Doctoratus.* At their reception they not only assumed this *title*, but they also had a *crown of laurel* placed on their heads.

To this ceremony the ingenious writer attributes the revival of the custom. The *poets* were not slow in putting in their claims to what they had most a right; and their patrons sought to encourage them by these honourable distinctions.

The following *formula* is the exact style of those which are yet employed in the universities to confer the degree of Bachelor and Doctor, and serves to confirm the conjecture of Resnel:—

"We, count and senator," (Count d'Anguillara, who bestowed the laurel on Petrarch,) "for us and our College, declare FRANCIS PETRARCH, great poet and historian, and for a special mark of his quality of poet, we have placed with our hands on his head a *crown of laurel*, granting to him, by the tenor of these presents, and by the authority of King Robert, of the senate and the people of Rome, in the poetic, as well as in the historic art, and generally in whatever relates to the said arts, as well in this holy city as elsewhere, the free and entire power of reading, disputing, and interpreting all ancient books, to make new ones, and compose poems, which, God assisting, shall endure from age to age."

In Italy, these honours did not long flourish; although Tasso dignified the laurel crown by his accept-

ance of it. Many got crowned who were unworthy of the distinction. The laurel was even bestowed on QUERNO, whose character is given in the Dunciad:—

> "Not with more glee, by hands pontific crown'd,
> With scarlet hats wide-waving circled round,
> Rome in her capitol saw *Querno* sit,
> Thron'd on seven hills, the Antichrist of wit."
>
> Canto II.

This man was made laureat, for the joke's sake; his poetry was inspired by his cups, a kind of poet who came in with the dessert; and he recited twenty thousand verses. He was rather the *arch-buffoon* than the *arch-poet* of Leo X. though honoured with the latter title. They invented for him a new kind of laureated honour, and in the intermixture of the foliage raised to Apollo, slily inserted the vine and the cabbage leaves, which he evidently deserved, from his extreme dexterity in clearing the pontiff's dishes and emptying his goblets.

Urban VIII. had a juster and more elevated idea of the children of Fancy. It appears that he possessed much poetic sensibility. Of him it is recorded, that he wrote a letter to Chiabrera to felicitate him on the success of his poetry: letters written by a pope were then an honour only paid to crowned heads. One is pleased also with another testimony of his elegant dispositions. Charmed with a poem which Bracciolini presented to him, he gave him the surname of DELLE-APE, of the bees, which were the arms of this amiable pope. He, however, never crowned these favourite bards with the laurel, which, probably, he deemed unworthy of them.

In Germany, the laureat honours flourished under the reign of Maximilian the First. He founded, in 1504, a Poetical College at Vienna; reserving to himself and the regent the power of bestowing the laurel. But the institution, notwithstanding this well-concerted scheme, fell into disrepute, owing to a cloud of claimants who were fired with the rage of versifying, and who, though destitute of poetic talents, had the laurel bestowed on them. Thus it became a prostituted honour; and satires were incessantly levelled against the usurpers of the crown of Apollo: it seems, notwithstanding, always to have had charms in the eyes of the Germans, who did not reflect, as the Abbé elegantly expresses himself, that it faded when it passed over so many heads.

The Emperor of Germany retains the laureatship in all its splendour. The selected bard is called *Il Poeta Cesareo.* Apostolo Zeno, as celebrated for his erudition, as for his poetic powers, was succeeded by that most enchanting poet, Metastasio.

The French never had a *Poet Laureat,* though they had *Regal Poets;* for none were ever solemnly crowned. The Spanish nation, always desirous of titles of honour, seem to have known that of the *Laureat;* but little information concerning it can be gathered from their authors.

Respecting our own country little can be added to the information of Selden. John Kay, who dedicated a History of Rhodes to Edward IV., takes the title of his *humble Poet Laureat.* Gower and Chaucer were laureats; so was likewise Skelton to Henry VIII. In

the acts of Rymer, there is a charter of Henry VII. with the title of *pro Poeta Laureato*, that is, perhaps, only *a Poet laureated at the university*, in the king's household.

Our poets were never solemnly crowned as in other countries. Selden, after all his recondite researches, is satisfied with saying, that some trace of this distinction is to be found in our nation. Our kings from time immemorial have placed a miserable dependent in their household appointment, who was sometimes called the *King's poet*, and the *King's versificator*. It is probable that at length the selected bard assumed the title of *Poet Laureat*, without receiving the honours of the ceremony; or at the most, the *crown of laurel* was a mere obscure custom practised at our universities, and not attended with great public distinction. It was oftener placed on the skull of a pedant than wreathed on the head of a man of genius. Shadwell united the offices both of Poet Laureat and Historiographer; and by a MS. account of the public revenue, it appears that for two years' salary he received six hundred pounds. At his death Rymer became the Historiographer and Tate the Laureat: both offices seem equally useless, but, if united, will not prove so to the Poet Laureat.

ANGELO POLITIAN.

Angelo Politian, an Italian, was one of the most polished writers of the fifteenth century. Baillet has placed him amongst his celebrated children; for he was

a writer at twelve years of age. The Muses indeed cherished him in his cradle, and the Graces hung round it their wreaths. When he became professor of the Greek language, such were the charms of his lectures, that Chalcondylas, a native of Greece, saw himself abandoned by his pupils, who resorted to the delightful disquisitions of the elegant Politian. Critics of various nations have acknowledged that his poetical versions have frequently excelled the originals. This happy genius was lodged in a most unhappy form; nor were his morals untainted: it is only in his literary compositions that he appears perfect.

As a specimen of his Epistles, here is one, which serves as prefatory and dedicatory. The letter is replete with literature, though void of pedantry; a barren subject is embellished by its happy turns. Perhaps no author has more playfully defended himself from the incertitude of criticism and the fastidiousness of critics.

MY LORD,

You have frequently urged me to collect my letters, to revise and to publish them in a volume. I have now gathered them, that I might not omit any mark of that obedience which I owe to him, on whom I rest all my hopes, and all my prosperity. I have not, however, collected them all, because that would have been a more laborious task than to have gathered the scattered leaves of the Sibyl. It was never, indeed, with an intention of forming my letters into one body that I wrote them, but merely as occasion prompted, and as

the subjects presented themselves without seeking for them. I never retained copies except of a few, which, less fortunate, I think, than the others, were thus favoured for the sake of the verses they contained. To form, however, a tolerable volume, I have also inserted some written by others, but only those with which several ingenious scholars favoured me, and which, perhaps, may put the reader in good humour with my own.

There is one thing for which some will be inclined to censure me; the style of my letters is very unequal; and, to confess the truth, I did not find myself always in the same humour, and the same modes of expression were not adapted to every person and every topic. They will not fail then to observe, when they read such a diversity of letters (I mean if they do read them), that I have composed not epistles, but (once more) miscellanies.

I hope, my Lord, notwithstanding this, that amongst such a variety of opinions, of those who write letters, and of those who give precepts how letters should be written, I shall find some apology. Some, probably, will deny that they are Ciceronian. I can answer such, and not without good authority, that in epistolary composition we must not regard Cicero as a model. Another perhaps will say, that I imitate Cicero. And him I will answer by observing, that I wish nothing better than to be capable of grasping something of this great man, were it but his shadow!

Another will wish that I had borrowed a little from the manner of Pliny the orator, because his profound

sense and accuracy were greatly esteemed. I shall oppose him by expressing my contempt of all the writers of the age of Pliny. If it should be observed, that I have imitated the manner of Pliny, I shall then screen myself by what Sidonius Apollinaris, an author who is by no means disreputable, says in commendation of his epistolary style. Do I resemble Symmachus? I shall not be sorry, for they distinguish his openness and conciseness. Am I considered in nowise resembling him? I shall confess that I am not pleased with his dry manner.

Will my letters be condemned for their length? Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, and Cicero, have all written long ones. Will some of them be criticised for their brevity? I allege in my favour the examples of Dion, Brutus, Apollonius, Philostratus, Marcus Antoninus, Alciphron, Julian, Symmachus, and also Lucian, who vulgarly, but falsely, is believed to have been Phalaris.

I shall be censured for having treated of topics which are not generally considered as proper for epistolary composition. I admit this censure, provided while I am condemned, Seneca also shares in the condemnation. Another will not allow of a sententious manner in my letters; I will still justify myself by Seneca. Another, on the contrary, desires abrupt sententious periods; Dionysius shall answer him for me, who maintains, that pointed sentences should not be admitted into letters.

Is my style too perspicuous? It is precisely that which Philostratus admires. Is it obscure? Such is that of Cicero to Atticus. Negligent? An agreeable

negligence in letters is more graceful than elaborate ornaments. Laboured? Nothing can be more proper, since we send epistles to our friends as a kind of presents. If they display too nice an arrangement, the Halicarnassian shall vindicate me. If there is none; Artemon says there should be none.

Now as a good and pure Latinity has its peculiar taste, its manners, and, to express myself thus, its Atticisms; if in this sense a letter shall be found not sufficiently Attic, so much the better; for what was Herod the sophist censured? but that having been born an Athenian, he affected too much to appear one in his language. Should a letter seem too Attical; still better, since it was by discovering Theophrastus, who was no Athenian, that a good old woman of Athens laid hold of a word, and shamed him.

Shall one letter be found not sufficiently serious? I love to jest. Or is it too grave? I am pleased with gravity. Is another full of figures? Letters being the images of discourse, figures have the effect of graceful action in conversation. Are they deficient in figures? This is just what characterises a letter, this want of figures! Does it discover the genius of the writer? This frankness is recommended. Does it conceal it? The writer did not think proper to paint himself; and it is one requisite in a letter, that it should be void of ostentation. You express yourself, some one will observe, in common terms on common topics, and in new terms on new topics. The style is thus adapted to the subject. No, no, he will answer; it is in common

terms you express new ideas, and in new terms common ideas. Very well! It is because I have not forgotten an ancient Greek precept which expressly recommends this.

It is thus by attempting to be ambidextrous, I try to ward off attacks. My critics will however criticise me as they please. It will be sufficient for me, my Lord, to be assured of having satisfied you, by my letters, if they are good; or by my obedience, if they are not so.

Florence, 1494.

ORIGINAL LETTER OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.

In the Cottonian Library, Vespasian, F. III. is preserved a letter written by Queen Elizabeth, then Princess. Her brother Edward the Sixth had desired to have her picture; and in gratifying the wishes of his majesty, Elizabeth accompanies the present with an elaborate letter. It bears no date of the *year* in which it was written; but her place of residence was at Hatfield. There she had retired to enjoy the silent pleasures of a studious life, and to be distant from the dangerous politics of the time. When Mary died, Elizabeth was still at Hatfield. At the time of its composition she was in habitual intercourse with the most excellent writers of antiquity: her letter displays this in every part of it; but it is too rhetorical. It is here now first published.

LETTER.

"Like as the riche man that dayly gathereth riches to riches, and to one bag of money layeth a greate sort

til it come to infinit, so me thinkes, your Majestie not beinge suffised with many benefits and gentilnes shewed to me afore this time, dothe now increase them in askinge and desiring wher you may bid and cõmaunde, requiring a thinge not worthy the desiringe for it selfe, but made worthy for your highness request. My pictur I mene, inwiche if the inward good mynde towarde your grace might as wel be declared as the outwarde face and countenance shal be seen, I wold nor haue taried the cõmandement but prevent it, nor haue bine the last to graunt but the first to offer it. For the face, I graunt, I might wel blusche to offer, but the mynde I shall neur be ashamed to present. For thogth from the grace of the pictur, the coulers may fade by time, may giue by wether, may be spotted by chance, yet the other nor time with her swift winges shall ouertake, nor the mistie cloudes with their loweringes may darken, nor chance with her slipery fote may overthrow. Of this althogth yet the profe could not be greate because the occasions hathe bine but smal, notwithstandinge as a dog hathe a day, so may I perchaunce haue time to declare it in dides wher now I do write them but in wordes. And further I shal most humbly beseche your Maiestie that whan you shall loke on my pictur you wil witsafe to thinke that as you haue but the outwarde shadow of the body afore you, so my inward minde wischeth, that the body it selfe wer oftener in your presence; howbeit bicause bothe my so beinge I thinke coulde do your Maiestie litel pleasure thogth my selfe great good, and againe bicause I se as yet not the time agreing therũto,

I shal lerne to folow this saing of Orace, Feras non culpes quod vitari non potest. And thus I wil (troblinge your Maiestie I fere) ende with my most humble thankes, besechinge God longe to preserue you to his honour, to your cõfort, to the realmes profit, and to my joy. From Hatfilde this 1 day of May.

"Your Maiesties most humbly Sistar
"and Seruante
"ELIZABETH."

ANNE BULLEN.

THAT minute detail of circumstances frequently found in writers of the history of their own times is more interesting than the elegant and general narratives of later, and probably of more philosophical historians. It is in the artless recitals of memoir-writers, that the imagination is struck with a lively impression, and fastens on petty circumstances, which must be passed over by the classical historian. The writings of Brantome, Comines, Froissart, and others, are dictated by their natural feelings: while the passions of modern writers are temperate with dispassionate philosophy, or inflamed by the virulence of faction. History instructs, but Memoirs delight. These prefatory observations may serve as an apology for Anecdotes, which are gathered from obscure corners, on which the dignity of the historian must not dwell.

In Houssaie's *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 435, a little circumstance is recorded concerning the decapitation of

the unfortunate Anne Bullen, which illustrates an observation of Hume. Our historian notices that her executioner was a Frenchman of Calais, who was supposed to have uncommon skill. It is probable that the following incident might have been preserved by tradition in France, from the account of the executioner himself:—Anne Bullen being on the scaffold, would not consent to have her eyes covered with a bandage, saying that she had no fear of death. All that the divine who assisted at her execution could obtain from her was, that she would shut her eyes. But as she was opening them at every moment, the executioner could not bear their tender and mild glances; fearful of missing his aim, he was obliged to invent an expedient to behead the queen. He drew off his shoes, and approached her silently; while he was at her left hand, another person advanced at her right, who made a great noise in walking, so that this circumstance drawing the attention of Anne, she turned her face from the executioner, who was enabled by this artifice to strike the fatal blow, without being disarmed by that spirit of affecting resignation which shone in the eyes of the lovely Anne Bullen.

"The Common Executioner,
Whose heart th' accustom'd sight of death makes hard,
Falls not the axe upon the humble neck
But first begs pardon." SHAKSPEARE.

JAMES THE FIRST.

IT was usual, in the reign of James the First, when they compared it with the preceding glorious one, to

distinguish him by the title of *Queen James*, and his illustrious predecessor by that of *King Elizabeth!* Sir Anthony Weldon informs us, "that when James the First sent Sir Roger Aston as his messenger to Elizabeth, Sir Roger was always placed in the lobby: the hangings being turned so that he might see the queen dancing to a little fiddle, which was to no other end than that he should tell his master, by her youthful disposition, how likely he was to come to the crown he so much thirsted after;"—and indeed, when at her death this same knight, whose origin was low, and whose language was suitable to that origin, appeared before the English council, he could not conceal his Scottish rapture, for, asked how the king did? he replied, "Even, my lords, like a poore man wandering about forty years in a wildernesse and barren soyle, and now arrived at the *Land of Promise*." A curious anecdote, respecting the economy of the court in these reigns, is noticed in some manuscript memoirs written in James's reign, preserved in a family of distinction. The lady, who wrote these memoirs, tells us that a great change had taken place in *cleanliness*, since the last reign; for having rose from her chair, she found, on her departure, that she had the honour of carrying *upon* her some companions who must have been inhabitants of the palace. The court of Elizabeth was celebrated occasionally for its magnificence, and always for its nicety. James was singularly effeminate; he could not behold a drawn sword without shuddering; was much too partial to handsome men; and appears to merit the bitter satire of Churchill. If wanting other

proofs, we should only read the second volume of "Royal Letters," 6987, in the Harleian collections, which contains Stenie's correspondence with James. The gross familiarity of Buckingham's address is couched in such terms as these:—he calls his majesty "Dere dad and Gossope!" and concludes his letters with "your humble slaue and dogge, Stenie." He was a most weak, but not quite a vicious man; yet his expertness in the art of dissimulation was very great indeed. He called this *King-Craft.* Sir Anthony Weldon gives a lively anecdote of this dissimulation in the king's behaviour to the Earl of Somerset at the very moment he had prepared to disgrace him. The earl accompanied the king to Royston, and, to his apprehension, never parted from him with more seeming affection, though the king well knew he should never see him more. "The earl when he kissed his hand, the king hung about his neck, slabbering his cheeks, saying—For God's sake, when shall I see thee again? On my soul I shall neither eat nor sleep until you come again. The earl told him on Monday (this being on the Friday). For God's sake let me, said the king:—Shall I, shall I?—then lolled about his neck;—then for God's sake give thy lady this kisse for me, in the same manner at the stayre's head, at the middle of the stayres, and at the stayre's foot. The earl was not in his coach when the king used these very words (in the hearing of four servants, one of whom reported it instantly to the author of this history), 'I shall never see his face more.'"

He displayed great imbecility in his amusements,

which are characterised by the following one, related by Arthur Wilson:—When James became melancholy in consequence of various disappointments in state matters, Buckingham and his mother used several means of diverting him. Amongst the most ludicrous was the present. They had a young lady, who brought a pig in the dress of a new-born infant: the countess carried it to the king, wrapped in a rich mantle. One Turpin, on this occasion, was dressed like a bishop in all his pontifical ornaments. He began the rites of baptism with the common prayer-book in his hand; a silver ewer with water was held by another. The marquis stood as godfather. When James turned to look at the infant, the pig squeaked: an animal which he greatly abhorred. At this, highly displeased, he exclaimed,—"Out! Away for shame! What blasphemy is this!"

This ridiculous joke did not accord with the feelings of James at that moment; he was not "i' the vein." Yet we may observe, that had not such artful politicians as Buckingham and his mother been strongly persuaded of the success of this puerile fancy, they would not have ventured on such "blasphemies." They certainly had witnessed amusements heretofore not less trivial which had gratified his majesty. The account which Sir Anthony Weldon gives, in his Court of King James, exhibits a curious scene of James's amusements. "After the king supped, he would come forth to see pastimes and fooleries; in which Sir Ed. Zouch, Sir George Goring, and Sir John Finit, were the chiefe and master fools, and surely this fooling got them more than any

others' wisdome; Zouch's part was to sing bawdy songs, and tell bawdy tales: Finit's to compose these songs: there was a set of fiddlers brought to court on purpose for this fooling, and Goring was master of the game for fooleries, sometimes presenting David Droman and Archee Armstrong, the king's foole, on the back of the other fools, to tilt one at another, till they fell together by the eares; sometimes they performed antick dances. But Sir John Millicent (who was never known before) was commended for notable fooling; and was indeed the best *extemporary foole* of them all." Weldon's "Court of James" is a scandalous chronicle of the times.

His dispositions were, however, generally grave and studious. He seems to have possessed a real love of letters, but attended with that mediocrity of talent which in a private person had never raised him into notice. "While there was a chance," writes the author of the Catalogue of Noble Authors, "that the dyer's son, Vorstius, might be divinity-professor at Leyden, instead of being burnt, as his majesty hinted *to the Christian prudence* of the Dutch that he deserved to be, our ambassadors could not receive instructions, and consequently could not treat on any other business. The king, who did not resent the massacre at Amboyna, was on the point of breaking with the States for supporting a man who professed the heresies of Enjedius, Ostodorus, &c., points of extreme consequence to Great Britain! Sir Dudley Carleton was forced to threaten the Dutch, not only with the hatred of king James, but also with his pen."

This royal pedant is forcibly characterised by the following observations of the same writer:—

"Among his majesty's works is a small collection of poetry. Like several of his subjects, our royal author has condescended to apologise for its imperfections, as having been written in his youth, and his maturer age being otherwise occupied. So that (to employ his own language) 'when his ingyne and age could, his affaires and fascherie would not permit him to correct them, scarslie but at stolen moments, he having the leisure to blenk upon any paper.' When James sent a present of his harangues, turned into Latin, to the protestant princes in Europe, it is not unentertaining to observe in their answers of compliments and thanks, how each endeavoured to insinuate that he had read them, without positively asserting it! Buchanan, when asked how he came to make a pedant of his royal pupil, answered that it was the best he could make of him. Sir George Mackenzie relates a story of his tutelage, which shows Buchanan's humour, and the veneration of others for royalty. The young king being one day at play with his fellow pupil, the master of Erskine, Buchanan was reading, and desired them to make less noise. As they disregarded his admonition, he told his majesty, if he did not hold his tongue, he would certainly whip his breech. The king replied, he would be glad to see who would *bell the cat*, alluding to the fable. Buchanan lost his temper, and throwing his book from him, gave his majesty a sound flogging. The old Countess of Mar rushed into the room, and taking the king in her arms,

asked how he dared to lay his hands on the Lord's anointed? Madam, replied the elegant and immortal historian, I have whipped his a——, you may kiss it if you please!"

Many years after this was published, I discovered a curious anecdote:—Even so late as when James I. was seated on the throne of England, once the appearance of his *frowning tutor in a dream* greatly agitated the king, who in vain attempted to pacify his illustrious pedagogue in this portentous vision. Such was the terror which the remembrance of this inexorable republican tutor had left on the imagination of his royal pupil.

James I. was certainly a zealous votary of literature; his wish was sincere, when at viewing the Bodleian Library at Oxford, he exclaimed, "Were I not a king I would be an university man; and if it were so that I must be a prisoner, if I might have my wish, I would have no other prison than this library, and be chained together with these good authors."

Hume has informed us, that "his death was decent." The following are the minute particulars: I have drawn them from an imperfect manuscript collection, made by the celebrated Sir Thomas Browne:—

"The lord keeper, on March 22, received a letter from the court, that it was feared his majesty's sickness was dangerous to death; which fear was more confirmed, for he, meeting Dr. Harvey in the road, was told by him that the king used to have a beneficial evacuation of nature, a sweating in his left arm, as helpful to him as any fontanel could be, which of late failed.

"When the lord keeper presented himself before him, he moved to cheerful discourse, but it would not do. He stayed by his bedside until midnight. Upon the consultations of the physicians in the morning he was out of comfort, and by the prince's leave told him, kneeling by his pallet, that his days to come would be but few in this world. '*I am satisfied*,' said the king; 'but pray you assist me to make me ready for the next world, to go away hence for Christ, whose mercies I call for, and hope to find.'

"From that time the keeper never left him, or put off his clothes to go to bed. The king took the communion, and professed he died in the bosom of the Church of England, whose doctrine he had defended with his pen, being persuaded it was according to the mind of Christ, as he should shortly answer it before him.

"He stayed in the chamber to take notice of every thing the king said, and to repulse those who crept much about the chamber door, and into the chamber; they were for the most addicted to the Church of Rome. Being rid of them, he continued in prayer, while the king lingered on, and at last *shut his eyes with his own hands*."

Thus, in the full power of his faculties, a timorous prince encountered the horrors of dissolution. *Religion* rendered cheerful the abrupt night of futurity; and what can *philosophy* do more, or rather, can philosophy do as much?

I proposed to have examined with some care the works

of James I.; but that uninviting task has been now postponed till it is too late. As a writer his works may not be valuable, and are infected with the pedantry and the superstition of the age; yet I *suspect* that James was not that degraded and feeble character in which he ranks by the contagious voice of criticism. He has had more critics than readers. After a great number of acute observations and witty allusions, made extempore, which we find continually recorded of him by contemporary writers, and some not friendly to him, I conclude that he possessed a great promptness of wit, and much solid judgment and acute ingenuity. It requires only a little labour to prove this.

That labour I have since zealously performed. This article, composed *more than thirty years* ago, displays the effects of first impressions and popular clamours. About *ten* years I *suspected* that his character was grossly injured, and *lately* I found how it has suffered from a variety of causes. That monarch preserved for us a peace of more than twenty years; and his talents were of a higher order than the calumnies of the party who have remorselessly degraded him have allowed a common inquirer to discover. For the rest I must refer the reader to "An Inquiry into the Literary and Political Character of James I.;" in which he may find many correctives for this article.

GENERAL MONK AND HIS WIFE.

From the MS. collection of Sir Thomas Browne, I shall rescue an anecdote, which has a tendency to show that it is not advisable to permit ladies to remain at home, when political plots are to be secretly discussed. And while it displays the treachery of Monk's wife, it will also appear that, like other great revolutionists, it was ambition that first induced him to become the reformer he pretended to be.

"Monk gave fair promises to the Rump, but last agreed with the French Ambassador to take the government on himself; by whom he had a promise from Mazarin of assistance from France. This bargain was struck late at night: but not so secretly but that Monk's wife, who had posted herself conveniently behind the hangings, finding what was resolved upon, sent her brother Clarges away immediately with notice of it to Sir A. A. She had promised to watch her husband, and inform Sir A. how matters went. Sir A. caused the Council of state, whereof he was a member, to be summoned, and charged Monk that he was playing false. The general insisted that he was true to his principles, and firm to what he had promised, and that he was ready to give them all satisfaction. Sir A. told him if he were sincere he might remove all scruples, and should instantly take away their commissions from such and such men in his army, and appoint others, and that before he left the room. Monk consented; a great

part of the commissions of his officers were changed, and Sir Edward Harley, a member of the council, and then present, was made governor of Dunkirk, in the room of Sir William Lockhart; the army ceased to be at Monk's devotion; the ambassador was recalled, and broke his heart."

Such were the effects of the infidelity of the wife of General Monk!

PHILIP AND MARY.

Houssaie in his Memoires, vol. i. p. 261, has given the following curious particulars of this singular union:—

"The second wife of Philip was Mary Queen of England; a virtuous princess (Houssaie was a good catholic), but who had neither youth nor beauty. This marriage was as little happy for the one as for the other. The husband did not like his wife, although she doted on him; and the English hated Philip still more than he hated them. Silhon says, that the rigour which he exercised in England against heretics partly hindered Prince Carlos from succeeding to that crown, and for *which purpose* Mary had invited him in case she died childless!—But no historian speaks of this pretended inclination, and is it probable that Mary ever thought proper to call to the succession of the English throne the son of the Spanish Monarch? This marriage had made her nation detest her, and in the last years of her life she could be little satisfied with him from his

marked indifference for her. She well knew that the Parliament would never consent to exclude her sister Elizabeth, whom the nobility loved for being more friendly to the new religion, and more hostile to the house of Austria."

In the Cottonian library, Vespasian F. III. is preserved a note of instructions in the hand-writing of Queen Mary, of which the following is a copy. It was, probably, written when Philip was just seated on the English throne.

"Instructions for my lorde Previsel.

"Firste, to tell the Kinge the whole state of this realme, w^t^ all things appartaynyng to the same, as myche as ye knowe to be trewe.

"Seconde, to obey his commandment in all thyngs.

"Thyrdly, in all things he shall aske your aduyse to declare your opinion as becometh a faythfull conceyllour to do.

"Mary the Quene."

Houssaie proceeds: "After the death of Mary, Philip sought Elizabeth in marriage; and she, who was yet unfixed at the beginning of her reign, amused him at first with hopes. But as soon as she unmasked herself to the pope, she laughed at Philip, telling the Duke of Feria, his ambassador, that her conscience would not permit her to marry the husband of her sister."

This monarch, however, had no such scruples. Incest

appears to have had in his eyes peculiar charms; for he offered himself three times to three different sisters-in-law. He seems also to have known the secret of getting quit of his wives when they became inconvenient. In state matters he spared no one whom he feared; to them he sacrificed his only son, his brother, and a great number of princes and ministers.

It is said of Philip, that before he died he advised his son to make peace with England, and war with the other powers. *Pacem cum Anglo, bellum cum reliquis.* Queen Elizabeth, and the ruin of his invincible fleet, physicked his frenzy into health, and taught him to fear and respect that country which he thought he could have made a province of Spain!

On his death-bed he did every thing he could for *salvation*. The following protestation, a curious morsel of bigotry, he sent to his confessor a few days before he died:—

"Father confessor! as you occupy the place of God, I protest to you that I will do every thing you shall say to be necessary for my being saved; so that what I omit doing will be placed to your account, as I am ready to acquit myself of all that shall be ordered to me."

Is there, in the records of history, a more glaring instance of the idea which a good Catholic attaches to the power of a confessor than the present authentic example? The most licentious philosophy seems not more dangerous than a religion whose votary believes that

the accumulation of crimes can be dissipated by the breath of a few orisons, and which, considering a venal priest to "occupy the place of God," can traffic with the divine power at a very moderate price.

After his death a Spanish grandee wrote with a coal on the chimney-piece of his chamber the following epitaph, which ingeniously paints his character in four verses :—

Siendo moço luxurioso
Siendo hombre, fue cruel;
Siendo viejo, codicioso;
Que se puede esperar del?

In youth he was luxurious;
In manhood he was cruel;
In old age he was avaricious;
What could be hoped from him?

END OF VOL. II.

Bradbury and Evans (late T. Davison), Whitefriars.